



**ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES**  
Inter-American Council for Integral Development  
(CIDI)



**FIRST PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE  
SECOND MEETING OF MINISTERS AND HIGH-LEVEL  
AUTHORITIES ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE FRAMEWORK OF CIDI**

June 28 and 29, 2010  
Washington, D.C., Padilha Vidal room

OEA/Ser.K/XVIII.2  
CIDI/RIMDS-II/RP/INF.1/10  
22 June 2010  
Original: Spanish

**REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL MEETING: "TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT: THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND RISK  
MANAGEMENT IN THE AMERICAS"**

SANTA MARTA, COLOMBIA, APRIL 16, 2010

As part of preparations for the Second Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development to be held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 6 to 8, 2010, the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (GS/OAS), through the Department of Sustainable Development (OAS/DSD), organized and conducted a technical meeting of experts in connection with the proposed themes for the Ministerial Meeting. The technical meeting was organized in collaboration with the Government of Colombia through the Ministry of Interior and Justice and was held on April 16, 2010, in the city of Santa Marta, Colombia.

The meeting, which was developed in the framework of the Second Hemispheric Encounter on National Mechanisms and Networks for Disaster Risk Reduction "The Santa Marta Encounter: from theory to practice", was attended by about 40 specialists from the environment, climate change, development fields, as from the risk management field, and authorities from South America, Central America and the Caribbean, who participated in the discussions of each of the themes and in identifying specific issues and recommendations. A total of three (3) technical presentations were carried out, which were followed by a process of dialogue, questions and answers. This document summarizes the main conclusions and recommendations reached as a result of this process.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING**

The Technical Meeting of Experts discussed the results of the Second Hemispheric Encounter on National Mechanisms and Networks for Disaster Risk Reduction, and identified technical inputs, strategies and priority actions to be presented to the different delegations of the Member States of the OAS within the framework of the preparatory process for the Second Inter American Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development.

The discussions at this meeting were focused on the theme proposed by the country hosting the Ministerial Meeting with the vision of achieving an integrated approach of risk management and the approach on climate change challenges in the context of sustainable development.

On specific terms, the meeting was aimed at:

- (i) Key aspects of the Santa Marta Encounter to be considered in the process of the Second Inter American Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development; and
- (ii) Perspectives and political view, both national and regional, of vulnerability and risk management strategies of climate change adaptation for planning in the context of sustainable development.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Item 1.** Key aspects of the Santa Marta Encounter to be considered in the process of the Second Inter American Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Notwithstanding that a countless efforts to reduce disaster risks have been carried out, the importance of developing more aggressive measures to reduce the risks generated by the phenomena associated with climate change, which currently are already generating great economic losses to the countries of the Hemisphere, is still standing. Similarly, it is recognized that such measures must be cross cutting to all sectors and be an integral part of development plans.

On one hand, the way in which countries, agencies and cooperation agencies have been handling the issue of Climate Change Adaptation must be analyzed. This because to date, most of the actions taken correspond to major investments on community levels and to the development of meetings to discuss around the issue, being now the most important thing to go aside from "seeing the risk" and begin to execute concrete actions to manage the risk and to reduce the effects of climate change, with an overview of the macroeconomic and development benefits.

It is recognized that the impacts of hydro meteorological phenomena due to Climate Change will increase existing threats and create new hydro meteorological hazards, such as:

- Increase on the extreme hydro meteorological phenomena intensity and frequency, with the consequent increase of floods, landslides and droughts;
- Increase on the sea level rise, with the consequent increase of risk of floods in plains, coastal zones and urban areas; and
- Increase of the hurricane distribution areas and their intensity.

In that sense, the relevance that gains the strengthening of meteorological institutions is

established, not only for predictions and management of scenarios, but to guide and prioritize public and private investment.

On the other hand, Climate Change Adaptation refers to how to deal with the consequences and impacts of climate change, providing opportunities for articulation and coordination with Disaster Risk Reduction, since in both cases the interventions are aimed at the development process and resource management. The Organization of the United Nations stays away then from the 'Climate Change Mitigation' debate – greenhouse gas emissions reduction (GHG), and focuses its efforts on climate risk analysis, which contributes to the strategies and mechanisms of Climate Change Adaptation and these to Risk Management.

Many of the strategies and methodologies that are proposed or implemented today under the concept of Climate Change Adaptation, have been developed already over several years within other themes, such as Sustainable Development and Risk Management. The fact that Climate Change is currently being prioritized, should not make us lose the sight on the hazards from other sources, such as seismic and volcanic activity, and disease and vectors, among others.

Land use planning is identified as an effective and efficient prevention tool not only to confront and adapt to Climate Variability, but also to Climate Change, integrating the so-called Climate Change scenarios or probable Climate conditions into the exercise.

Hydro meteorological observation and monitoring networks and early warning systems are recognized as measures to cope and to adapt to Climate Change. However, it is also recognized that the historical series of data observations and trends derived from them are not sufficient to develop forecasting models and 'worst case' scenarios should be integrated instead, strengthening monitoring systems and allocating more resources to applied research for development.

It has become necessary to close the gap between the scientific community, responsible for the development of Climate Change impact models and public and institutional policy makers and decision makers. In this regard, the importance of the OAS role is highlighted to facilitate consensus mechanisms among the different actors, as well as to generate a commitment assumed at the political level and easy to implement at the technical level. Some mechanisms to bridge the gap between the scientific community and public and institutional policy makers and decision makers, are to train government officers in the risk management institutions. However, it is also necessary to train the scientific community in terms of risk management in order to bring more effectively the necessary information for decision making. In that sense, the necessity to speak in plain language is also recognized and, in terms of impact, according to 'worst case' scenarios and not in probabilistic terms and complex numerical models.

The intimate relationship between Environmental Management and Risk Management is demonstrated, and the extent of the impact of Climate Change, beyond threats of natural hazards such as floods and landslides, including direct threats on the development processes. The decrease in water sources of high peaks glaciers and the loss of land and river ecosystems is an example. Tools such as Payment for Environmental Services (PES) are considered, in this

context, as economic instruments to consider in adaptation to Climate Change strategies.

The communities' involvement processes and social participation have proven their importance in achieving significant commitments and results, as they have helped engage the involvement of various sectors of national development and establish institutional management frameworks.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support institutional strengthening actions to enable countries to improve the natural hazards observation and forecasting system;
- Encourage and promote the creation of information systems to identify areas of greatest vulnerability, promoting the development of contingency plans, implementation of early warning systems, and infrastructure building needed to reduce losses;
- Create local governance mechanisms that allow planning and channeling of the initiatives generated by disasters;
- Develop action plans to achieve the Sustainable Development objectives; and
- Channel all with the macroeconomic agenda.

**Item 2.** Integrating Risk Management in addressing climate change challenges.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the negotiations of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is currently considered how to reduce greenhouse gases emissions (GHG) that are attributed mainly to developed countries, although it is recognized that in the coming years a significant increase in GHG emissions in developing countries, already suffering the consequences of climate change, is anticipated. This situation gives rise to debate on who are responsible for covering the costs involved in addressing the challenges of Climate Change and who must shape their economies to reduce their emissions. However, and while this debate continues, it is clear that in Latin America and the Caribbean it is of prime importance to take urgent measures in this regard.

Risk Management has to continue gaining position in the Climate Change agendas. In that sense, it is of vital importance to continue working on the issue of vulnerability, on the premise that vulnerability is very high (with or without Climate Change) and that future events will cause big human and material losses.

It is essential that the resources invested in Risk Management and Adaptation to Climate Change be managed through national platforms by the same countries, '*resources allocation from home*', as it is to understand that the resources coming from international cooperation are not enough. Similarly, it must be ensured for cases in which investments generate a fiscal risk, to have innovative financial instruments and tools currently offered by regional banks, as the

mechanism of the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance (CCRIF), among others.

Call for positioning of risk management within the Climate Change Convention, recognizing the value of proposals such as the one of the Government of Colombia, which is a leading position, is primary. This considers that from the financial mechanisms and funds for Adaptation to Climate Change available under the UNFCCC, 30% be directed to Risk Management programs and actions, with additional contributions from their national counterparts.

Similarly, it is recognized that the discussion about Climate Change on the framework of the Santa Marta Meeting and on the implementation of national mechanisms and networks for disaster reduction is intended only to make Risk Management visible in the context of existing Change Climate processes.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Each country should review their investment in disaster risk management, quantify the implementation of proposed actions and prioritize;
- Find room for risk management on the discussions of Climate Change;
- To publicize mechanisms to transfer and share the risks such as CCRIF;
- Emphasize the protection and sustainable use of natural resources and improve environmental quality;
- Manage water resource in an efficient and sustainable way; and
- Make progress in the region in the adaptation to the impact and mitigation to the causes of climate change.

**Item 3.** Progressing towards achieving the commitments in the region

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

There are two levels: a technical and a political level, and a mechanism for consensus must be found between both for the commitment made at the political level be feasible to implement at the technical level.

It is also of great importance to emphasize the need for better coordination for cooperation at the international, national and local level.

Finally, efforts to integrate risk management policies in development plans are critical.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The creation of legal frameworks with more emphasis on citizen participation is key to building systems and regulations for prevention, mitigation and disaster response;
- Government authorities must lead concrete actions in natural disaster management and

promote public participation in decision making and as observers or executors of risk management policies; and

- The institutionalization of citizen participation is key in natural disaster risk management.

**ANNEXES**

- I) Agenda of the Meeting, and
- II) List of Participants

ANNEX I: AGENDA OF THE MEETING**SECOND INTER-AMERICAN MEETING OF MINISTERS AND  
HIGH LEVEL AUTHORITIES ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

“Towards Sustainable Development: The Challenges of Climate Change and  
Risk Management in the Americas”

Technical Meeting:  
Santa Marta, Colombia  
April 16, 2010

**Background and Objectives:** Following-up on a mandate from the Heads of State and Government of the Americas from the Fifth Summit of the Americas, OAS Member States officially convened the Second Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development. This meeting will be hosted by the Dominican Republic in Santo Domingo, October 6-8, 2010, in the framework of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI).

This Technical Meeting of experts will examine results from the Second Hemispheric Encounter on National Mechanisms and Networks for Disaster Risk Reduction, organized by the Government of Colombia, the OAS Department of Sustainable Development (OAS/DSD) and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR-Americas), and will identify technical inputs, strategies and priority actions that will be considered by the different delegations from OAS Member States as part of the preparatory process for the Second Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development. The discussions during the meeting will be focused on the theme proposed by the host country of the Ministerial Meeting with the vision of achieving an integrated approach in risk management and addressing the challenges of climate change in the framework of sustainable development.

Climate change and risk management experts will gather at this Technical Meeting and will work during sessions that will incorporate key elements from the Santa Marta Encounter, together with relevant technical elements to be considered by the Ministers and High Level Sustainable Development Authorities. The meeting report will be prepared by the DSD and distributed prior to the first preparatory meeting of the Ministerial Meeting, as an input for the development of the Meeting agenda. A concept note on the theme of the Meeting of Ministers will be prepared based on the inputs from this meeting, and will be used throughout the process.

## AGENDA

- 1:30 Registration
- 2:00 **Opening Session**
- *Carlos Costa, Minister of Environment, Colombia*
  - *Cletus Springer, Director, Department of Sustainable Development, OAS*
- 2:15 **First Session: Key aspects of the Santa Marta Encounter to be considered in the process for the Second Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development**  
 This session will highlight key elements from the Santa Marta Encounter to promote discussions on technical inputs relevant to the theme proposed for the Ministerial Meeting.
- *Ronald Jackson, Executive Director of the Office for Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management and Co-Chair of the Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation*
  - *Moderator: Pablo Gonzalez, Chief, Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation Section, OAS/DSD*
- 2:45 **Second Session: Integrating Risk Management to Address the Challenges of Climate Change**  
 This session will present national and regional perspectives and the political vision of vulnerability and strategies for risk management and climate change mitigation for planning in the framework of sustainable development. Furthermore, the legal, institutional and financing mechanisms for the implementation of the strategies will be discussed, including the need for information sharing. Lessons learned from the region will be included in the dialogue.
- *Carlos Costa, Minister of Environment, Colombia*
  - *Nelson Toca, Vice- Minister, Ministry of Economy, Development and Planning, Dominican Republic*
  - *Moderator: Claudia S. de Windt, Chief, Environmental Law, Good Governance and Policy Section, OAS/DSD*



4:30

**Third Session: Towards the Achievement of the Regional Commitments**

This session will discuss opportunities for moving forward with the commitments linked to risk management and climate change in the region in the framework of the OAS.

- *Cletus Springer, Director, DSD*
- *Moderator: Cletus Springer, Director, DSD*

5:45

Closing

ANNEX II: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

**TECHNICAL MEETING**

*Santa Marta, Colombia*

*April 16, 2010  
2: 00 PM to 5:30 PM*

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