



*Report from the Secretariat on the conclusions of the meeting of the
Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation*

First Meeting of the Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation

December 03, 2006

Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia

On December 3, 2006 in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, the Department of Sustainable Development of the Organization of American States (OAS), with support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), held the first meeting of the Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation with participation of high level government officials and distinguished members of the natural disasters field from the entire hemisphere preceding the First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development.

The main objectives of the meeting were: 1) To advance the identification of synergies and opportunities for cooperation, within the framework of the Inter-American Strategic Plan, for policies on vulnerability reduction, risk and response management, of the Inter-American Committee for Disaster Reduction; and 2) To identify information needs, knowledge and experiences, best practices and lessons learned in the disasters field for the advancement on the formulation of public policy for reduction of risk to natural disasters and its integration into national policies and development plans.

The meeting also sought to identify the aggregate value and the comparative advantage of the Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation in relation to other networks that already exist.

The meeting gathered more than 50 people, between experts, managers and decision makers from national institutions responsible for the natural disaster management, organizations of the Inter-American system and of the United Nations system, regional inter-governmental organizations, such as the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), the Andean Committee for Prevention and Attention to Disasters (CPARADE) and the Coordination Center for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC), international agencies of cooperation and the private sector.



*Report from the Secretariat on the conclusions of the meeting of the
Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation*

The event was organized in three thematic areas:

1. Information and documentation centers, use of computer based technology, geographic information systems and other information systems.
2. Contingency and humanitarian assistance preparedness and planning
3. Vulnerability reduction and risk management.

The Department of Sustainable Development of the OAS sought to identify in this meeting the information needs, knowledge and practices; and the need of coordination and cooperation, according to the specific priorities of each sub region in the Americas. It started with an ample discussion between information and assistant providers, users and beneficiaries.

More over, the meeting highlighted the progress and needs of hemispheric and global tools, such as the Inter-American Strategic Plan and the Global Platform of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

The main conclusions, preliminarily identified by the Secretary of the meeting, are the following:

1. The Inter-American Network provides an instrument that supports the development of the national platforms of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, easing the exchange of experiences and best practices in order to bring all the national platforms in the Americas to the same level of advancement.
2. The Inter-American Network provides a tool to integrate the progress of the different intergovernmental and regional organizations – CDERA, CEPREDENAC and CAPRADE, and their strategies, to the Inter-American Strategic Plan.
3. The Network should use and strengthen the intergovernmental organizations at the regional level and the existing networks, such as the IDB's network and PAHO's network, and capitalize on the information and specific capacities of each one of them.



*Report from the Secretariat on the conclusions of the meeting of the
Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation*

4. The comparative advantage of the Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation is the capacity to bring, throughout the SG/OAS as the main forum for the Inter-American Dialogue on development issues, risk management to the different fora, ministries and sectorial policies, in a way that public development policies integrate risk management as part as their national and regional development plans.
5. The Network also provides an opportunity to advance towards the implementation of a common language that will allow the integration of a better risk management in all sectors, departing from a clear understanding of the different areas that are implied in disaster risk management and risk mitigation and;
6. It is recommended to identify 3 to 5 high priority themes in which to concentrate the efforts of the Network, in order to reach concrete actions, with tangible and measurable results so as to avoid duplication of efforts that other agencies of the Inter-American system and of the United Nations system and other networks are already doing. Among them we can preliminarily identify: 1) Codification and regulation to increase the resilience of educational, health and housing infrastructure; 2) dissemination of information and of existing educational material among the public administrations, at the local and national level, and for the most vulnerable communities; and 3) the assessment of legal frameworks, regulations and other legal and institutional tools that will ease humanitarian assistance and risk transfer.

The Network Secretariat, throughout the Department of Sustainable Development of the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development, commits to elaborate a detailed report of the meeting with the identification of high priority themes and a first working program for the biannual 2007-2008 period that will be distributed among the participants of the Bolivia meeting that will summarize their comments and observations.

Among the proposed activities are:

- 1) Creation of an inter-agency working group, integrated by those responsible for the risk management within the agencies of the Inter-American system.
- 2) Organization of regional fora, according to the existing structures –CDERA, CAPRADE, CEPREDENAC, and other convenient agencies.
- 3) Organization of an Inter-American Forum for Disaster Mitigation.



*Report from the Secretariat on the conclusions of the meeting of the
Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation*

- 4) An assessment study of the regulatory and legal frameworks.
- 5) Implementation of thematic fora – virtual and live – that will support the formulation and implementation of the national platforms of the global platform of the International Strategy and;
- 6) Assessments gaps of information and cooperation that will allow for periodical monitoring, in collaboration with other networks and agencies of the Inter-American system.

Finally, some specific recommendations were highlighted for the sub-regions of the Caribbean, Central America and the Andean Countries.

- 1) For the Caribbean, the need of identification of cooperation for evaluation of social, economic and environmental vulnerability to climate change in the coastal zone is pivotal. The need for advancement in risk transfer mechanisms and tools that include public-private associations is evident, as well as the establishment of emergency funds.
- 2) The countries from Central America, CEPREDENAC members, reaffirm the priority and need to keep advancing in the integrated water resources management, since 90% of the disasters in the region are of hydro-meteorological origin; and,
- 3) The country members of the Andean Community for Prevention and Attention to Disasters (CAPRADE), presented a declaration that was handed in to the Executive Secretary of the OAS, in which they ask that the inputs of the Andean Strategy are taken into account and to integrate them to the Inter-American Strategic Plan 2005-2010. At the same time, they asked for cooperation to advance in the standing of CAPRADE and exchange information with other regions.