AG/RES. 1885 (XXXII-O/02)

NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION

(Adopted at the fourth plenary session held on June 4, 2002)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

HAVING SEEN the annual report of the Permanent Council as it pertains to the recommendations of the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR) (AG/doc.4059/02);

BEARING IN MIND:

The agreements by the Heads of State and Government, as set out in the Quebec City Plan of Action of the Third Summit of the Americas, in particular the sections “Disaster Management” and “Environmental Foundation for Sustainable Development,” especially the commitments to develop, implement, and sustain shared comprehensive disaster management strategies and programs to reduce the vulnerability of their populations and economies to natural and man-made disasters; and

That the Heads of State and Government also recognized the need for protection of the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources as essential to prosperity and to the sustainability of their countries’ economies;

REITERATING the importance of reducing the vulnerability of our countries to natural hazards and disasters through the appropriate use of sustainable development practices as an element of sustained economic and social development;

REITERATING FURTHER that the IACNDR is the principal forum of the Organization of American States charged with providing the Permanent Council with “strategic thinking, recommendations on initiatives relating to natural disasters, and advice on methods of financing them, paying special attention to policies and programs designed to reduce the vulnerability of member states to natural disasters”;

NOTING that at the Third Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Committee on Sustainable Development, held on February 11 and 12, 2002, at OAS headquarters in Washington, D.C., member states were urged to integrate natural hazard vulnerability reduction in national development policies and plans, to identify vulnerable populations and infrastructure, and to mitigate possible damage;

TAKING NOTE of the important conclusions and decisions taken at the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development and embodied in the Consensus of Monterrey adopted on March 22, 2002; and

CONSIDERING that the Permanent Council, at its meeting held on March 13, 2002, took note of the report presented by the Chair of the Committee on Hemispheric Security with respect to the recommendations of the IACNDR and agreed to adopt the recommendations mentioned therein,

RESOLVES:
1. To endorse the recommendations of the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR) which are identified for urgent, intermediate, and long-term action and are contained in document CP/CSH-433/02 rev. 1.

2. To urge member states to give priority to reducing vulnerability and loss of life.

3. To encourage the increased use of market-based instruments in order to minimize the diversion of resources by sharing rehabilitation and reconstruction costs and risk reduction.

4. To request the IACNDR to begin immediately its work on the Strategic Plan on Disaster Response and Vulnerability Reduction.

5. To request the IACNDR to:
   a. Urge disaster-affected member states and other relevant entities to adopt, to the greatest extent possible, the recommendations put forth by those hemispheric organizations which have made assessments;
   b. Stimulate the active participation of relevant inter-American agencies and programs in the four thematic working groups established by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) Task Force;
   c. Play a proactive role in the provision of technical expertise in disaster coordination to the permanent missions to the OAS and the ministers of foreign affairs in the member states;
   d. Devote a specific session to the discussion of regional civilian-military cooperation issues in disaster preparedness and response to assure that civilian leadership is strengthened;
   e. Continue stimulating the active participation of the relevant inter-American agencies and sub-regional programs in the three IACNDR working groups so as to improve information exchange in the region;
   f. Study and propose measures aimed at strengthening activities undertaken under the White Helmets Initiative established within the OAS to assist countries affected by natural disasters; and
   g. Study and propose to the preparatory body of the Special Conference on Security the measures that it may consider appropriate for strengthening cooperation among member states on this issue, for final consideration by the Special Conference.

6. Instruct the Permanent Council to revise the FONDEM Statutes and assign to the IACNDR the functions of coordinating aid in the face of natural disasters, establishing cooperative relations and coordination of resources and emergency plans with the UN and other institutions.

7. To instruct the Permanent Council to consider planning and launching an inter-American mass media education campaign on appropriate humanitarian assistance and donations, aimed at offering an opportunity to seek consensus between the governments and the NGO community.
8. To request the Permanent Council to carry out the activities mentioned in this resolution in accordance with the program-budget of the Organization and other resources.

9. To request the IACNDR to report periodically to the Permanent Council on its compliance with this resolution.

10. To request the Permanent Council to report in due course to the General Assembly on the implementation of this resolution.