

AG/RES. 2114 (XXXV-O/05)

NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

(Adopted at the fourth plenary session, held on June 7, 2005)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

HAVING SEEN the Annual Report of the Permanent Council to the General Assembly, in particular the section on the matters entrusted to the Committee on Hemispheric Security (AG/doc.4376/05 add. 5);

DEEPLY CONCERNED by the devastation in several member states caused by diverse natural disasters, including phenomena such as the severe 2004 hurricane season, cyclical problems associated with the “El Niño” warm water currents in the Pacific Ocean, floods, landslides, earthquakes, and tsunamis, which have resulted in losses suffered by their populations including the tragic loss of life, the substantial damage to their economic and social infrastructure, and the resulting negative impact on their development objectives and on their poverty eradication efforts, exacerbated by the diversion of financial resources to disaster response and away from sustainable development;

REAFFIRMING:

The importance of urgently reducing the vulnerability of member states to natural disasters through the development of domestic natural disaster reduction strategies, mutual assistance, and technical cooperation;

The importance of the implementation by member states of applicable building codes and land-use plans to reduce the impact of natural hazards; and

The need to strengthen the planning and management activities of the OAS so as to respond more effectively to the frequent natural disasters in the Hemisphere;

RECOGNIZING:

The importance of the Inter-American Convention to Facilitate Disaster Assistance (“the Convention”), the Inter-American Emergency Aid Fund (FONDEM), and the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR) as the principal regional instrument and mechanisms to assist member states in preparing for, responding to, and reducing vulnerability to natural disasters; and

The significant work carried out by the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), the Inter-American Committee on Sustainable Development, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB) and Inter-American Defense College (IADC), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), in matters relating to natural disasters within their respective areas of competence;

NOTING WITH SATISFACTION:

The efforts of the Permanent Council through its Committee on Hemispheric Security and the recommendations concerning the redundancies in the composition and function of the IACNDR, the Inter-American Committee for Emergency Situations established under FONDEM, and the Inter-American Emergency Aid Committee mentioned in the Convention, as well as the recommendations on natural disaster reduction and risk management proposed for implementation by the Organization of American States and its subsidiary bodies; and

The initiative being coordinated by the General Secretariat, through the Office of Sustainable Development and Environment, with the participation of the international financial institutions, particularly the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, to review present practices and needed policy initiatives dealing with the economics of disaster mitigation in the Caribbean: quantifying benefits and costs of mitigating natural hazard losses;

RECALLING:

Its prior resolutions on natural disaster reduction [AG/RES. 2024 (XXXIV-O/04), AG/RES. 1955 (XXXIII-O/03), and AG/RES. 1885 (XXXII-O/02)] and on OAS natural disaster reduction mechanisms [AG/RES. 1803 (XXXI-O/01) and AG/RES. 1755 (XXX-O/00)];

That at the Summits of the Americas and the Special Conference on Security (Mexico City, October 2003) and through the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development (PIDS) the member states have expressed concern over natural and man-made disasters that negate development gains and cause greater devastation in the most vulnerable states and among the poorest populations that have not yet developed adequate prevention, mitigation, and emergency response capabilities;

That at the Third Summit of the Americas (Quebec City, April 2001) the member states endorsed the Plan of Action's Disaster Management Strategy to pursue better risk management, capacity-building, forecasting, mitigation, and knowledge- and information-sharing; and

That in the Declaration on Security in the Americas, adopted at the above-mentioned Special Conference on Security, the member states expressed their “concern over natural and man-made disasters that afflict states of the Hemisphere and cause greater devastation in the most vulnerable states that have not yet developed adequate prevention and mitigation capabilities” and pledged to “strengthen the existing inter-American mechanisms and develop new cooperation mechanisms to improve and broaden the region’s response capability in preventing and mitigating the effects of these disasters,” to “effectively and swiftly address natural disasters by strengthening existing bilateral, subregional, and multilateral actions and institutions, such as the Inter-American Committee for Natural Disaster Reduction and, when possible, using technology and scientific resources to prevent their occurrence, as well as taking adaptive measures to mitigate their effects in order to avoid or reduce damage to the environment, productive and critical infrastructure[,] our heritage, and, most importantly, our peoples”; and

BEARING IN MIND:

That the Permanent Council, through the Committee on Hemispheric Security, informed the preparatory process of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, convened by the United Nations General Assembly (Kobe, Japan, January 18-22, 2005), of the Organization's work in natural disaster reduction, which was recognized in the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo

Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, adopted at that Conference; and

That the said Conference resolved to pursue during the next 10 years the “substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries”; and the importance of the Hyogo Framework for Action for the achievement of this goal,

RESOLVES:

1. To endorse the recommendations of the Permanent Council set out in the document “Recommendations of the Committee on Hemispheric Security on Natural Disaster Reduction and Risk Management” (CP/CSH-718/05).

2. To reiterate the important role of the Committee on Hemispheric Security in coordinating cooperation among the organs, agencies, entities, and mechanisms of the Organization related to the various aspects of security and defense in the Hemisphere, including natural and man-made disasters, respecting the mandates and areas of competence of each, in order to achieve the application, evaluation, and follow-up of the Declaration on Security in the Americas.

3. To harmonize the relationship among the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR), the Inter-American Committee for Emergency Situations (IACSE) of the Inter-American Emergency Aid Fund (FONDEM), the Inter-American Emergency Aid Committee (IAEAC), and the other organs, agencies, and entities of the Organization of American States and the inter-American system in addressing matters relating to natural disasters and in particular mitigation through vulnerability reduction and risk management, monitoring and alert, emergency preparedness and response, and disaster recovery and reconstruction efforts.

4. To instruct the Permanent Council and the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) to set up a joint consultative body of the Committee on Hemispheric Security (CSH) and the Permanent Executive Committee of CIDI (CEPCIDI) whose principal tasks would be:

- a. To work on the immediate implementation of the recommendations on systematic risk management, including risk identification, risk reduction, and risk transfer, directed to the OAS and its subsidiary bodies;
- b. To review the Statutes of FONDEM and of the IACNDR and propose the amendments necessary to create a single permanent inter-American committee to address natural and other disasters and carry out the functions of the IACNDR, the IACSE, and the IAEAC, which would be composed of the relevant organs, agencies, entities, and mechanisms of the OAS and the inter-American system;
- c. To convene in 2005, within the framework of the CSH, a meeting of the regional, subregional, and national disaster preparedness agencies, with the participation of governmental experts, subregional sector institutions, and international experts to share experiences and methods of analysis of vulnerability and risk and of the cost and benefit of investing in natural

hazards mitigation, and to forward the recommendations of that meeting to the Permanent Council, CIDI, and the permanent inter-American committee mentioned in subparagraph 4.b above; and

- d. To develop a methodology for funding specially geared towards prevention of and reconstruction and recovery in the event of natural disasters.

5. To instruct the General Secretariat to provide, through the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) and the Office of Sustainable Development and Environment, technical support and advice on natural disaster reduction and risk management to the joint consultative body and the permanent inter-American committee referred to in the chapeau of operative paragraph 4 and in subparagraph 4.b above.

6. To request the inter-American organs, agencies, and entities, especially the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), the Inter-American Committee on Sustainable Development, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB) and Inter-American Defense College (IADC), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the General Secretariat to support the work of the joint consultative body referred to in operative paragraph 4 above.

7. To instruct the General Secretariat to work in close collaboration with other multilateral agencies such as the Inter-Agency Secretariat for the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC).

8. To urge member states to establish short time frames for the implementation of the recommendations set out in the Inter-American Strategic Plan for Policy on Vulnerability Reduction, Risk Management and Disaster Response (IASP), developed by the IACNDR, aimed at reducing the cost of the impact of natural hazard events that lead to a disaster and the number of persons needing attention during a disaster.

9. To encourage the international community and international financial institutions to fund multinational programs on risk management focusing on each of its three main areas: identification, reduction, and transfer.

10. To actively encourage the preparation and sharing of individual country disaster preparedness, response, and mitigation plans in order to facilitate more effective support from members of the international community.

11. To urge the states parties to the Inter-American Convention to Facilitate Disaster Assistance to designate a National Coordinating Authority pursuant to the terms of the Convention and to notify the General Secretariat of that designation.

12. To invite those member states that have not already ratified the Inter-American Convention to Facilitate Disaster Assistance to give consideration to signing and/or ratifying the Convention, as the case may be, and to adopt the measures necessary for its effective implementation.

13. To instruct the Permanent Council and the General Secretariat to carry out the activities mentioned in this resolution, in accordance with the resources allocated in the program-budget of the Organization and other resources.

14. To request the Permanent Council and the General Secretariat to submit a report on the implementation of this resolution to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth regular session.

15. To request the Secretary General to forward a copy of this resolution to the United Nations Secretary-General.