AG/RES. 2184 (XXXVI-O/06)

NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION, RISK MANAGEMENT,
AND ASSISTANCE IN NATURAL AND OTHER DISASTER SITUATIONS

(Adopted at the fourth plenary session, held on June 6, 2006)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

HAVING SEEN the Annual Report of the Permanent Council to the General Assembly, in particular the section on the work of the Joint Consultative Organ of the Committee on Hemispheric Security and the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI) on Natural Disaster Reduction and Risk Management (AG/doc.4548/06 add. 2);

DEEPLY CONCERNED by the devastation in several member states caused by diverse natural disasters, including phenomena such as the severe 2004 and 2005 hurricane seasons, cyclical problems associated with the “El Niño” warm water currents in the Pacific Ocean, floods, landslides, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, 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, technical cooperation, land-use planning, and improvement of building codes;

RECOGNIZING the need to include a gender perspective in the Organization's activities related to natural disaster reduction and risk management;

CONSIDERING that effective natural disaster reduction and mitigation is dependent on a high degree of preparedness, effective mobilization and coordination by government at all levels, as well as by the private sector, and nongovernmental, community, and civil society organizations;

RECOGNIZING:

The important role of the Committee on Hemispheric Security (CSH) in coordinating cooperation among the organs and mechanisms of the Organization related to the various aspects of security and defense in the Hemisphere, including natural and man-made disasters, in the framework of the Declaration on Security in the Americas;

The work of the Joint Consultative Organ on Natural Disaster Reduction and Risk Management established in the framework of the CSH of the Permanent Council and the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI), in its efforts to proceed with and further its consideration of natural disaster reduction and risk management, in keeping with resolution AG/RES. 2114 (XXXV-O/05);
That the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR), in accordance with the amendments to its Statutes and to the Statutes of Inter-American Emergency Aid Fund (FONDEM) adopted by the General Assembly at this regular session, is a principal regional instrument for assisting member states in preparing for, and responding and reducing vulnerability to, natural and other disasters, as well as the advisory body to FONDEM and to the states parties to the Inter-American Convention to Facilitate Disaster Assistance;

The commitments made by member states to meet the natural disaster risk reduction goals of the Hyogo Framework for Action, adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (Kobe, Japan, January 18-22, 2005), including the important role of regional organizations in helping to achieve those goals; and

The need to continue strengthening the Organization’s planning and management activities so as to respond more effectively to the frequent natural disasters in the Hemisphere;

RECALLING:

Its prior resolutions on natural disaster reduction and risk management [AG/RES. 2114 (XXXV-O/05)], 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)]; and

That, through the Plan of Action of the Fourth Summit of the Americas, held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in November 2005, the member states pledged to substantially improve the capacity at national, regional, and hemispheric levels for risk mitigation; to implement cost-effective and robust early warning systems; to enhance disaster recovery and reconstruction capabilities in collaboration with relevant international and regional institutions; and to explore with relevant international and regional institutions the coordinated development of effective public-private catastrophic risk insurance systems;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the Third Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities Responsible for Policies on Decentralization, Local Government and Citizen Participation at the Municipal Level in the Hemisphere, held in Recife, Brazil, in October 2005, expressed in the Declaration of Recife its concern over the impact of natural disasters on issues related to democratic governance, such as efforts at poverty reduction and achieving more inclusive development to reduce social and regional inequality; and

NOTING:

The ongoing coordination initiatives of the General Secretariat, through the Office of the Assistant Secretary General and the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development and its Department of Sustainable Development, with international financial institutions, and the important work of the organs, agencies, and entities of the inter-American system in matters related to natural disasters, in their areas of competence; and

The effort by the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB) to provide technical, advisory, and educational services on the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters, which has contributed to assisting populations affected by such disasters,
RESOLVES:

1. To continue to accord high priority to the topic of natural disaster reduction, risk management, and assistance in natural and other disaster situations.

2. To instruct the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR):
   a. To deal with matters related to natural disasters, especially their mitigation, through reduction of vulnerability and risk management, monitoring and warning, preparation and response to emergencies, and disaster recovery and reconstruction; and
   b. To work on the immediate implementation of the Permanent Council’s recommendations on systematic risk management, including risk identification, risk reduction, and risk transfer, directed to the Organization of American States (OAS) and its subsidiary bodies.

3. To request that the General Secretariat, through the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development and its Department of Sustainable Development, in coordination with the IACNDR and with the support of its members:
   a. Improve the economic cost-benefit analysis of natural disaster risk reduction and prevention, in consultation with the World Bank and subregional development banks;
   b. Identify funding geared specifically toward natural disaster prevention and disaster recovery and reconstruction, and inform the IACNDR accordingly; and
   c. Carry out its work bearing in mind the gender perspective.

4. To request that the General Secretariat, through the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development and its Department of Sustainable Development, also collaborate, as necessary, with the Department for the Promotion of Good Governance of the Secretariat for Political Affairs in providing technical support to the ministerial meeting on decentralization and its High-Level Inter-American Network on Decentralization, Local Government, and Citizen Participation (RIAD) for the analysis of information and the promotion of information exchanges on aspects of natural disaster reduction and risk management which impact the efforts of the member states to strengthen democratic governance.

5. To request the Permanent Council to prepare recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh regular session on the amendment of the IACNDR Statutes in order to bring its objectives, functions, structure, and capacity to obtain resources into line with its new mandates.
6. Also to request the Permanent Council to consider the possibility of convening, at an appropriate time, a meeting of high-level national authorities on natural disaster reduction and risk management, with the participation of the private sector, subregional, national, and international bodies and agencies, and nongovernmental, community, and civil society organizations.

7. Also to request the Permanent Council to consider, with the assistance of the General Secretariat and in consultation with the IACNDR, the advisability and feasibility of using a technical team of the Regional Humanitarian Volunteer Corps Network as a rapid response mechanism allowing the Organization to go to the scene of a disaster, at the request of the affected state, to contribute to the coordination of aid and interact with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as appropriate, as well as with specialized and local teams.

8. To request that the General Secretariat, through the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development and its Department of Sustainable Development:

   a. Provide advisory services on natural disaster reduction and risk management to the Permanent Council;

   b. Provide technical and advisory services on natural disaster reduction and risk management to the IACNDR; and

   c. Work in close collaboration with the private sector, with international, regional, subregional, and national natural disaster preparedness response organizations, and with nongovernmental, community, and civil society organizations.

9. 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.

10. To urge 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.
14. To request the IACNDR and the General Secretariat to submit a joint annual report to the Permanent Council on the fulfillment of the mandates of the General Assembly and the Statutes of the IACNDR.

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

16. To request the Permanent Council to report on the implementation of this resolution to the OAS General Assembly at its thirty-seventh regular session.

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