

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL  
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION (IACNDR)

(2022)

This report, prepared by the Office of the Assistant Secretary General (OASG), contains a summary of the activities carried out by the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR) during the months of January to December 2022.

I. CONSTITUTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE IACNDR

The Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR) acts as the principal forum of the Inter-American system for analyzing issues related to natural and other disasters, including the prevention and mitigation of their effects, and working in coordination with the governments of member states, competent national, regional, and international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations.

The IACNDR also seeks to harmonize efforts and facilitate the exchange of information on immediate and ongoing actions, as well as on the response plans of the institutions of the Inter-American system, sub-regional and international partners, OAS Member States, and Permanent Observers in response to natural and other disasters.

Additionally, the IACNDR seeks to strengthen hemispheric actions to achieve maximum international cooperation in support of national and/or regional efforts for timely prevention, preparedness, early warning, response, vulnerability reduction, emergency care, mitigation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.

It also provides advisory services to the Inter-American Emergency Aid Fund (FONDEM) in all matters pertaining to emergency aid, including social, humanitarian, material, technical, and financial assistance to member states pursuant to the Statutes of that Fund, and provides advisory and coordination services under the Inter-American Convention to Facilitate Disaster Assistance.

The IACNDR is comprised of the Chair of the OAS Permanent Council, the Secretary General of the OAS, the Assistant Secretary General of the OAS, the President of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Director General of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Secretary General of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH), the President of the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), the Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Director General of the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (IACD), the Chair of the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB), and the Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM).

In accordance with Article 5 of the IACNDR Statute adopted by the OAS General Assembly through Resolution AG / RES. 2955 (L-O / 20), the functions and responsibilities of the Chair of the IACNDR, Assistant Secretary General Nestor Mendez, in representation of the Secretary General, are as follows:

- a. Convenes the IACNDR;

- b. Represents the IACNDR before the other organs and agencies of the OAS;
- c. Directs and coordinates the meetings organized by the IACNDR with other agencies responsible for or associated with matters related to the prevention and mitigation of the effects of natural disasters;
- d. Coordinates performance of the IACNDR's functions;
- e. Invites member states with voice but without vote and, when necessary, invites permanent observers, and representatives of national, sub regional, regional, and international organizations and mechanisms to participate in IACNDR meetings with voice but without vote;
- f. Submits and presents an annual report on its activities to the Permanent Council;
- g. Assists in coordinating the cooperation among OAS member states, when invited to do so by the interested parties, and assists States affected by a natural disaster in notifying OCHA;
- h. Performs such duties as required under Article VII of the Statutes of the Inter-American Emergency Aid Fund (FONDEM), and
- i. Solicits voluntary contributions for the purposes established in these Statutes and in accordance with Article 13.

The IACNDR was established in 1999 by the General Assembly through resolution AG/RES. 1682 (XXIX-O/99) as an entity of the OAS and is comprised of different decentralized agencies, and entities of the Inter-American system. It is worth noting that although Article 12 of the IACNDR Statutes notes that “the General Secretariat of the OAS shall provide secretariat services to the IACNDR, in accordance with the resources allocated in the Regular Fund program-budget of the Organization and other resources,” the IACNDR in that regard is not allocated direct human or financial resources for its many activities.

## II. ACTIVITIES OF THE IACNDR

Pursuant to OAS General Assembly Resolution AG/RES. 2647 (XLI-O/11), paragraph 5.e, which stipulates the necessity “to activate the IACNDR in the event of emergency situations requiring international assistance in the region,” the Assistant Secretary General, in his capacity as Chair of the IACNDR convened a virtual meeting of the Committee on June 23, 2022 to review preparatory measures, continue discussions on strengthening relevant response mechanisms, and to assess established capacity in the region to ensure a coordinated response to natural disasters during the 2022 Atlantic Hurricane Season.

The meeting sought to facilitate the exchange of information on the actions taken and response plans implemented by the agencies of the Inter-American System, sub-regional and international partners, as well as OAS Member States and Permanent Observers. The Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Nestor Mendez, outlined important Resolutions adopted by the OAS General Assembly to further advance multilateral efforts and facilitate cooperation in responding to natural disasters, and provided a summary of initiatives undertaken by the Secretariats, decentralized agencies, entities, and dependencies of the Organization of American States (OAS) on advancing disaster resilience in the hemisphere.

The Committee also received presentations by Mr. Jamie Rhome, Acting Director of the National Hurricane Center (NHC) of the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); Mr. Tim Callaghan, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United States Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA); H.E. Anthony Phillips-Spencer, Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the OAS and then Chair of the Committee on Hemispheric Security; and Ms. Charlene Solozano, Specialist of the Department for Sustainable Development (DSD) from the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI). OAS Member States, as well as specialized agencies of the Inter-American System, namely the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB), the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), and the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) shared their ongoing efforts and plans to prepare for the hurricane and rainy seasons, and other potential calamities.

Additionally, the Office of the Assistant Secretary General, in collaboration with the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI), coordinated an informal virtual meeting with the OAS Secretariats, decentralized agencies, entities, and dependencies of the Inter-American system aimed at evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the General Secretariat's work on natural disasters with a view to formulate a more integrated approach to disaster resilience.

This meeting, which was held on July 12, 2022, provided an opportunity to assess capacities within the General Secretariat and ascertain a comprehensive overview of the substantive contribution made by the Organization to support the prevention, mitigation, and response efforts of its Member States. The Secretariats, decentralized agencies, entities, and dependencies provided information pertaining to the initiatives undertaken to comply with the implementation of Executive Order No. 16- 04, and to their work in reducing vulnerability to natural hazards, preparing for, and mitigating disasters, as well as reducing risk to disasters.

Participants at the meeting included representatives from the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI), the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), the Inter American Defense Board (IADB), the Secretariat for Rights to Access and Equity (SARE), the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL), and the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE). The Office of the Assistant Secretary General prepared a summary compilation of initiatives undertaken by these Secretariats, decentralized agencies, entities, and dependencies of the OAS on advancing disaster resilience in the hemisphere, which will be submitted to the Committee on Hemispheric Security in an effort to support the work of its Working Group to Develop an Action Plan and a Program Management Process for Assistance on the Security Implications of Climate Change pursuant to paragraph 56 of Resolution AG/RES. 2986 (LII-O/22) *Advancing Hemispheric Security: A Multidimensional Approach* .

### III. CONCLUSION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Chair wishes to recognize and reiterate its gratitude to the dedicated personnel of the OAS Secretariat who play an instrumental role in supporting the work of the IACNDR. The Chair expresses particular appreciation for the professionalism shown by the General Secretariat staff of the Department of Sustainable Development (SDS) of the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI), the

Department of Conferences and Meetings Management, and the Office of the Assistant Secretary General.

The Chair also recognizes and expresses gratitude for the collaboration from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB), the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), and the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH).