

***II Hemispheric Encounter  
National Mechanisms and Networks for Risk Reduction  
“Encounter of Santa Marta: from Theory to Practice”***

**Special Session  
Mechanisms for South-South Cooperation**

**14 April 2010  
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.  
Santa Marta, Colombia**

**DOCUMENT FOR DISCUSSION**

Over the last few decades, natural events of catastrophic consequences have increased in frequency and intensity. This is particularly true in the case of hydrometeorological events, in part due to climate change.

Of the 245 reported disasters that occurred in 2009, 224 were weather related, accounting for 55 million people out of the 58 million people affected; 7,000 out of 8,900 of those killed; and US\$15 billion out of the US\$19 billion in economic damages. "Over three quarters of the people killed and 95% of the total affected by natural hazards (in 2009) were due to extreme weather events" – this according to Ms. Margareta Wahlström, the United Nations Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, based on the preliminary 2009 disaster figures.

The current situation throughout the hemisphere of the Americas, in terms of common hazards and transboundary risks, demonstrate a need to specifically focus on a unified regional approach and to give special priority to the development of coordination and cooperation mechanisms to evolve from theory to practice. Furthermore, similar geographic, socio-cultural, economic, political and climatic conditions, particularly at the subregional level, provide the opportunity for countries to learn from one another through the knowledge and experience accumulated in dealing with risk management, disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change.

The response from actors throughout the hemisphere to the call for good practices within the framework of the II Hemispheric Encounter on National Mechanisms and Networks for Disaster Risk Reduction: “Encounter of Santa Marta: From Theory to Practice,” demonstrates but a small part of the many examples of sound experiences and knowledge accrued throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Such experiences and the sharing of lessons learned and expertise is crucial to finding the most effective and efficient solutions to common development challenges, in particular in the context of common situations of hazard and vulnerability. In this way, South–South Cooperation is proven to provide real benefits to societies and communities, particularly to the most vulnerable populations. South–South Cooperation also fosters leadership and ownership of the disaster risk reduction agenda.

As stated by the Chairman of the Group of 77 High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation, H.E. Ambassador Abdullah M. Alsaïdi, on 4 February of this year at the XVI Session of the High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation, “South-South cooperation, whether through the UN - bilaterally or regionally - is not intended to replace cooperation with the North. The premises are different, the conditions are different, and the expectations are different, which must be reflected accordingly. In this context, it is important to note that South-South cooperation is not aid. It is an expression of South-South cooperation based on true partnership for mutual development.”

According to the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), a joint initiative of the World Bank and UNISDR, “(e)ffective South–South Cooperation is demand-driven and based on shared objectives as well as a common interest in learning from partners. Commitments to these partnerships stem from concrete needs identified by national and local analyses. The resulting collaboration facilitates the mutual exchange of knowledge and expertise, benefiting each partner on a reasonably equitable basis. Such collaborations also build long-term institutional capacity and deliver tangible results.

In keeping with the principles of GFDRR’s South–South Cooperation Program, efforts towards South–South Cooperation in disaster risk reduction should look towards matching “well-informed demand” with “responsive supply” and supporting public, private, and civil society partnerships between institutions and organizations in low- and middle-income countries. Building or enabling partnerships that might focus on bring together policy makers and practitioners to provide essential upstream analyses and create supportive policy and financing environments for the effective implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and development programming; or, on the other hand, partnerships that focus on the implementation of specific aspects of risk management related to individual hazards, climate change adaptation, disaster mitigation, and recovery.

In keeping with the GFDRR focus, effective south-south cooperation should be driven by the demands from the countries and based on shared objectives as well as a common interest in learning from partners. Commitments are forged based on partnerships that stem from concrete needs identified by national and local analyses; in which the resulting collaboration stands to greatly facilitate the mutual exchange of knowledge and expertise, benefiting each partner on a reasonably equitable basis. Such collaborations have shown to also build long-term institutional capacity and deliver tangible results.

**Basic principles:**

- South-south cooperation is an instrument which allows for the creation, exchange and development of technical capacities, learning, experiences and

- knowledge among countries with similar levels of development and based on the principles of solidarity and mutual support.
- Strengthening cooperation through the exchange of good practices, lessons learned (both locally and nationally) and knowledge surrounding risk management, the analysis and evaluation of hazards, vulnerability reduction, information systems and institutional strengthening for preventing disasters arising from natural phenomena and mitigating the negative effects on the population constitutes an area in which the countries of the region can offer a broad and diverse basis of experiences that stands to effectively contribute to sustainable development.
  - South-south cooperation should be based on promoting mutually beneficial partnerships that seek to enhance disaster risk reduction and strengthen climate change adaptation practices through the sharing of knowledge, expertise and experience, in keeping with the Hyogo Framework for Action and Millennium Development Goals and in a manner that could be applied to poverty reduction, legislation, public investment, education and awareness raising, mitigation, risk management and other related areas.
  - Such cooperation should strive to enable good practices and experiences to reach those that are in need and to strengthen cooperation between the countries in the region, regional and international organizations, agencies for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the area of DRR, DRM and CCA, also involving civil society and the private sector.
  - Cooperation should be seen as an opportunity for mutually beneficial advancement in the context of shared responsibility, in keeping with the principles of frameworks aimed at sustainable development and poverty reduction, the HFA and the MDGs.
  - Cooperation could be based on fostering partnerships among actors and agencies at the local, subnational, national, regional levels.
  - Partnerships should be based on lessons learned and experiences that are adaptable to other situations with clearly defined criteria surrounding the necessary conditions in order to ensure appropriate implementation.
  - Partners in south-south cooperation should have the potential to leverage national and donor resources. They should also involve specific institutions and organizations committed to developing cooperative partnerships with comparable bodies in other countries.
  - Partnering entities might be government agencies, subnational entities, public and private sector institutions, nongovernmental and civil society organizations, academic or research based centres. They must be endorsed by their respective national platform for disaster risk reduction or the equivalent national coordination authority / system.

## **The purpose of this session**

The purpose of the Special Session is to lay the foundation for the creation of a regional cooperation mechanism that makes documented experiences, practices, lessons learned and knowledge surrounding disaster risk reduction and risk management available to interested parties throughout the region, with the aim of providing a constructive process for exchange and capacity-building. Similarly, it is expected that this session will contribute towards strengthening cooperation mechanisms among the countries in the region, as well as with regional and international organizations and bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies in the field of disaster risk management.

Likewise, the cooperation mechanism will seek to harmonize the different initiatives and processes currently taking place in the region, such as the High-Level Dialogues on South-South Cooperation and Capacity-Building (more specifically, by revisiting the outcomes of the event held in Colombia on March 24-25, 2010), the Colombian Cooperation Strategy for the Caribbean Basin, the White Helmets Initiative in Argentina, various UN networks and initiatives, such as UN-SPIDER, and sub-regional bodies such as CEPREDENAC, CAPRADE, CDEMA and the ACS. The cooperation mechanism does not intend to replace or compete against current cooperation initiatives developed in the region, but to maximize and articulate them.

Discussions during the Special Session will revolve around the following issues:

### *I. Establishing an operational mechanism*

The Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation (INDM) will be promoted as an operational coordination tool for this mechanism, in accordance with Resolution 2314 at the la XXXVII OAS General Assembly, held in Panama on June 5, 2007, which recognizes “the Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation (INDM) as the permanent hemispheric mechanism for strengthening practical cooperation among intergovernmental agencies in the area of disaster reduction, especially by sharing technical information and best practices.”

### *II. Institutional liaisons*

Representatives from various chancelleries and current national focal points for the Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation (INDM) and the Hyogo Framework for Action will serve as institutional liaisons. In addition, cooperation agencies and bodies will appoint an official in charge of following up and supporting all coordination and communication processes.

These institutional liaisons will be responsible, in each participating institution, for exchanging information and processing requests (both for offering and for requesting information) in their own countries and cooperation agencies and organizations. To this end, countries and cooperation organizations and bodies will agree on the

protocols needed to exchange information from and to the corresponding operational component within the South-South cooperation mechanism.

### *III. Areas for Action*

The key areas for action that are being proposed correspond to the main themes included in the thematic sessions of the Second Hemispheric Encounter —National Mechanisms and Networks for Risk Reduction: “Encounter of Santa Marta: From Theory to Practice”, which are:

1. Financing of disaster risk management —DRM (risk transfer, resource management, public and private investment, risk financing);
2. Institutionalization of DRM (its inclusion in sectoral agendas, planning at different government levels, decentralization, civil society participation);
3. Disaster risk management and adaptation to climate change (watershed management, environmental management, use of climate change scenarios);
4. Land-use Planning (codes and standards, geographic information systems, territorial planning, urban and rural human settlements, resettlement programs); and
5. Preparedness, early warning and public information (early warning systems, emergency preparedness, mutual aid protocols).

### *IV. A good practice and experience databank*

A databank with good practices and experiences —which will include, among other things, contact information and URLs of websites with information sources— will be developed. The starting point of the databank will be the compendium of experiences introduced at the Encounter of Santa Marta. The databank will be managed by the INDM, since it will be hosted on its online database.

### *V. An action plan and assignment of commitments*

Participants will prepare a first draft that will include the main commitments needed for the creation of the cooperation mechanism. In addition, an action plan will be put in place and implemented in a 3-5 month period. At the end of this period, the commitments will be reevaluated and a new action plan will be developed for one additional year. The new action plan will be more detailed and adapted to the needs identified during the first months.

## Preliminary agenda

Time	
06:00 PM	Opening remarks: South-South Cooperation and the Inter-American System– The Role of the Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation (INDM), by Ambassador Alfonso Quiñónez, GS/OAS (15 minutes)
06:15 PM	The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), by AD (15 minutes)
06:30 PM	Bilateral Cooperation: The Case of the White Helmets Commission, by Ambassador Gabriel Fuks, White Helmet Commission, Argentina (15 minutes)
06:45 PM	Bilateral Cooperation: Dr. Enrique Maruri, Director of International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Colombia (15 minutes)
07:00 PM	Plenary discussion (45 minutes)
07:45 PM	Conclusions (15 minutes)
08:00 PM	Closing