Conclusions and Recommendations

Meeting on the Institutional Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Africa
1. The “Meeting on the Institutional Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Africa” – organized by the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), the United Nations’ International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) and the Perez Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) of the Group of 77 – was held in Panama City, on 13 and 14 December 2010.

2. Subregional, regional and international organizations specializing in disaster risk reduction took note with interest of the work documents presented as a contribution to discussions: “Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction. Institutional and Policy Landscape in Asia and Pacific” (SP/RIALC-AA-RRD/DT No. 2) and “Disaster Risk Reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa. ISDR Informs – 2009 Issue” (SP/RIALC-AA-RRD/DT No. 3). Participants were informed that in January 2011 the document “Disaster risk reduction. A challenge for institutionality, integration and cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean” (SP/RIALC-AA-RRD/DT No. 4), being prepared by the ISDR, will be ready for its release.

3. Participants thanked for the presentations made by the representatives of subregional, regional and international institutions specializing in disaster risk reduction, regional and international organizations and the agencies of the United Nations system that participated in the meeting. All these presentations are available on the mini site for the meeting on SELA’s Web site.

4. During the debates on the institutional framework for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean, the delegations highlighted the following aspects:

   a) In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the impact of disasters in our region and consequently an increase in social and economic effects in most countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

   b) The delegates underscored that there is a well-developed Latin American and Caribbean institutional framework for disaster risk reduction. In addition, they stressed the fact that the Forum on Cooperation and Coordination of Regional Mechanisms for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas was created as a space for coordination and technical cooperation and exchange of knowledge and experiences in disaster risk management, so as to contribute to strengthening the existing national, subregional and regional mechanisms and platforms.

   c) It is necessary to strengthen the commitment and actions of the various existing regional and subregional institutions in view of the importance of the agenda for 2011 in the area of disaster risk reduction. In this connection, participants took note of the Meeting of the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas, to take place in Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit, Mexico, from 14 to 18 March 2011, and the Meeting of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in Geneva from 8 to 13 May 2011. Both events are organized by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) of the United Nations.

   d) It is essential to continue to improve mechanisms for measuring and assessing actions being taken in the area of disaster risk reduction in order to determine their progress. In addition, participants underscored the efforts made by the countries of the region for
the preparation of national progress reports on the implementation of the Hyogo Action Plan.

e) Participants recognized the existence of different subregional, regional and international scenarios and forums dealing with disaster risk reduction, such as the Regional Meetings on International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance and its Follow-up Group and the OAS Joint Working Group on Existing Mechanisms for Disaster Prevention and Response and Humanitarian Assistance, among others, which demonstrate the relevance of this issue in Latin America and the Caribbean and the emerging political commitment to deal with it in all areas of regional cooperation and integration.

f) In this regard, it was underscored the need to move, in a concerted and coherent manner, towards greater coordination among the existing authorities and particularly the construction of an agreed position to be submitted for consideration of those authorities.

g) In addition, the delegates stressed the importance of the interface between the technical role of subregional and regional institutions specializing in disaster risk reduction and those that are politically linked to the subject. They reiterated that both contribute to dealing with this issue in all its complexity and from a comprehensive and multidimensional point of view.

h) Latin American and Caribbean institutions require a renewed and intensified political backing and a decisive financial support to meet the objectives assigned to Member States and effectively develop strategies, policies, action plans and programmes for a comprehensive disaster risk reduction.

i) Participants stressed the need that the discussion, formulation and implementation of policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction take always into consideration that they are directly linked to development strategies and management procedures for development in each of our countries, as well as to programmes and projects for climate change adaptation.

j) It was reiterated that the priority for subregional, regional and international organizations specializing in disaster risk reduction is to support government actions to build safer and more resilient societies, using active mechanisms for community participation.

k) Emphasis was made on the fact that most countries in the region are increasingly playing a significant role as collaborators in the field of disaster risk reduction, which is promising for the development of South-South cooperation actions to be undertaken in this area. These actions are expected to strengthen regional cooperation, promoting the development of more effective mechanisms and instruments for such cooperation.

l) Participants indicated as one of the most worrying features of the growing global urbanization phenomenon a sustained increase in urban risk. In this connection, local governments and civil society are key players called to get involved in increasing the resilience of cities in the context of sustainable development. In addition, it was stressed the importance of promoting the World Campaign for Disaster Reduction Building Resilient Cities: “My city is preparing”, as an initiative of the UNISDR and its
partners to ensure that local governments are actively involved in close coordination with national governments and other strategic actors in urban risk reduction.

m) Participants stressed that the construction of safe and resilient communities requires joint efforts to improve the quality of post-disaster recovery assistance and protection of livelihoods.

5. Regarding the debates on the work programmes of relevant institutions specializing in disaster risk reduction, participants in the event highlighted the following aspects:

a) It is important to continue to improve and update coordination and cooperation actions, mechanisms and protocols of subregional, regional and international organizations working in disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean, harmonizing them with those in each country.

b) Participants agreed on the need to continue efforts to develop concrete partnerships among the various local, national, subregional, regional and international bodies linked to disaster risk reduction within the framework of cooperation and coordination efforts already underway.

c) Another important aspect for the action of subregional, regional and international organizations in the field of disaster risk reduction is to strengthen national and local capacities. In this connection, it is essential to prioritize capacity building and training of institutional and human resources linked to disaster risk reduction and humanitarian aid. Similarly, it is important to make efforts aimed at encouraging national and local institutions to strengthen their ability to offer services in the context of strategies for disaster risk reduction.

6. As part of this event, the Fourth Meeting of the Forum on Cooperation and Coordination of Regional Mechanisms for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas was held, with the participation of subregional institutions specializing in this area (CAPRADE, CEPREDENAC, CDEMA and REHU) and other international organizations as special guests, as well as the representative of Asia-Pacific.

7. The delegates recognized the usefulness of the presentations made by representatives of Asian and African institutions for disaster risk reduction, and stressed the importance of continuing these exchanges of inter-regional experiences to strengthen the effectiveness of their actions and programmes in LAC. In this regard, participants underscored several areas of interest where an inter-regional systematic exchange is considered advisable.

8. Likewise, participants took note of the upcoming “Seminar on Private Sector Contribution to Disaster Risk Reduction: Opportunities for cooperation at the disposal of governments”, to be held in 2011 and organized by the Permanent Secretary of SELA, with the support of the United Nations’ International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and regional collaborators.

9. Participants took note of the launch in 2011 of the virtual tool “Disaster Management System”, created with the support of the Brazilian government, under the terms of the Declarations of Florianópolis and Buenos Aires, in the II and III Regional Meetings on Enhancing International Humanitarian Partnerships.
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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Participants stressed the important work being developed - and to be improved in the future - by the Forum on Cooperation and Coordination of the Regional Mechanisms for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas, made up of subregional institutions specializing in this area. In this regard, they urged regional institutions such as SELA, SEGIB and multilateral organizations such as the ISDR to give the maximum political support to this experience of regional coordination and cooperation.

2. The actions to be taken by this Forum on Coordination and Cooperation should be aimed at promoting the design and improvement of tools, methodologies, procedures, protocols and guidelines to ensure a better and more efficient work, from a comprehensive perspective, as regards disaster risk reduction in LAC. Such information could become the “road map” for future work in the area of disaster risk reduction in our region, with doctrinal, thematic and instrumental components.

3. Participants urged national governments, with the support of relevant subregional, regional and international organizations, to include Disaster Risk Reduction in their development policies and planning processes. Similarly, the infrastructure for economic and social development must take into consideration the threats and vulnerabilities associated with disaster risk and climate change, and ensure the operation of facilities such as schools, hospitals and public transport through proper planning and management for development.

4. National and local authorities should promote the adoption and design of contents and practices related to disaster risk reduction in school curricula and community programmes, and strengthen networks for the development of knowledge, including traditional heritage, and capabilities for disaster risk reduction.

5. Participants urged local and national governments and subregional and regional organizations to promote systematic South-South cooperation actions on disaster risk reduction.

6. In this connection, they asked the UNISDR to promote the exchange of inter-regional experiences on disaster risk reduction, using existing mechanisms such as the various regional and global platforms.

7. In addition, it was recommended to consider the advisability of developing a medium-term array of Latin American and Caribbean offers and requests for cooperation among countries in the region on disaster risk reduction.

8. The organizers of this regional meeting thanked all attendees for their active participation in this important event.

9. The delegations congratulated the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, the United Nations' International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) and the Perez Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) of the Group of 77 for organizing and supporting the conduction of this meeting.