

AG/RES. 2492 (XXXIX-O/09)

EXISTING MECHANISMS FOR DISASTER PREVENTION AND RESPONSE  
AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AMONG THE MEMBER STATES

(Adopted at the fourth plenary session, held on June 4, 2009)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

CONSIDERING resolution AG/RES.. 2372 (XXXVIII-O/08), “Coordination of Volunteers in the Hemisphere in Response to Natural Disasters and the Fight against Hunger and Poverty - White Helmets Initiative”;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT resolution AG/RES.. 2314 (XXXVII-O/07), “Natural Disaster Reduction, Risk Management, and Assistance in Natural and Other Disaster Situations”;

TAKING NOTE of the report of the First Meeting of the Inter-American Committee for Natural Disaster Reduction (CP/CSH-926/07), the report on the Inter-American Emergency Aid Fund (CP/doc.4290/08), the reports of the Permanent Council (CP/INF.5758/08) and of the Committee on Hemispheric Security (CP/CSH-1039/08), and the conclusions and recommendations of the Disaster Assistance and Management Workshop, held on February 10, 2009, at OAS headquarters;

ACKNOWLEDGING the concern of the member states regarding the scale and consequences of natural and man-made disasters, which demonstrate the need to prevent their impact and, when necessary, to provide a rapid and coordinated humanitarian response;

REAFFIRMING the contents of resolution AG/RES.. 2373 (XXXVIII-O/08), “Simón Bolívar Humanitarian Task Force,” regarding “the urgent need to increase and coordinate humanitarian and technical assistance to ensure a rapid, timely, and effective response to natural and man-made disasters and other emergencies”;

BEARING IN MIND the Bali Road Map, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, held in Bali in 2007;

REAFFIRMING the guidelines provided in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, noteworthy among them: the identification of poverty as the main source of vulnerability; the need for a comprehensive approach to risk; the importance of regional approaches; and community involvement in risk reduction processes as a factor essential to their success;

AWARE of the need to include the problem of comprehensive risk management on the public agenda of the member states and to promote regional linkage for emergency and disaster response;

RECOGNIZING the need to consider a gender perspective in devising disaster prevention and reduction strategies;

RECOGNIZING ALSO the advisability of incorporating the experiences of indigenous peoples as support for the development of new and effective tools in the fight against hunger and poverty and in disaster risk reduction;

CONVINCED of the importance of incorporating diverse forms of participation by citizens, the community, and civil society at all levels of disaster planning, prevention, and response;

BEARING IN MIND THAT the 1991 Inter-American Convention to Facilitate Disaster Assistance has been ratified by only three member states;

POINTING TO the efforts made by member states that resulted in the implementation of national experiences of regional scope and multilateral participation, among others Argentina's White Helmets Initiative; the Emergency Management and Training Simulation System (SIGEN) and Chile's Agency for International Cooperation; Brazil's "Zero Hunger" Program; Venezuela's "Simón Bolívar" Humanitarian Task Force; the USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and Risk Reduction, of the United States; Mexico's National Civil Protection System; and Panama's disaster monitoring, surveillance, and information programs;

TAKING NOTE of subregional coordination initiatives and mechanisms for natural disaster prevention and response, such as the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), the Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC), and the Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Relief (CAPRADE), among others;

RECALLING the MERCOSUR Meeting on Civil Defense and Humanitarian Assistance; the Meeting of the UNASUR Defense Council; the First Regional Meeting on Enhancing International Humanitarian Partnerships, held in Mexico City on September 10 and 11, 2008; and the Declaration of the Latin American and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development, signed in Salvador de Bahía, Brazil, on December 13, 2008, which outlines the principles agreed to by the member states of Latin America and the Caribbean on natural disaster reduction and mitigation;

BEARING IN MIND the outcomes, guidelines, and agreements arising from international meetings on the subject of natural disasters and risk management: the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, held in Japan in 1994; the 30<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Geneva in 2007; the First Meeting of the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas, held in Panama, in 2009, and so on;

REAFFIRMING the importance of international cooperation aimed at strengthening ongoing national and regional efforts, as well as the importance of organizations dedicated to both natural disaster risk reduction and recovery processes; and recognizing the important role of national efforts in the area of natural disaster risk reduction and response; and

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the outcomes of the debate on the advisability of updating existing legislative and coordination mechanisms and of adapting them to the new realities and complexities of disasters, the guidelines of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, and the principles of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in accordance with the provisions of resolution AG/RES.. 2372 (XXXVIII-O/08),

RESOLVES:

1. To instruct the Permanent Council and the Inter-American Council for Integral Development to convene a meeting to begin the process of joint assessment of existing legislative and coordination mechanisms in the natural disaster and humanitarian assistance areas, which takes into account coordination efforts that can be made by the Organization, and to consider the advisability of updating them, presenting a proposal for action by the third quarter of 2010.

2. To request both councils to consider, in order to implement such a mandate, forming a joint working group composed of member states' representatives, who may be assisted by experts from the countries, the General Secretariat, and relevant inter-American, international, regional, and subregional bodies and institutions.

3. To urge the member states, regional organizations, the Inter-American Committee for Natural Disaster Reduction, and the Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation to foster coordination, cooperation, and synergy in actions to facilitate transparent management of supplies and expedite humanitarian assistance.

4. To renew, as appropriate, its mandates to the Permanent Council and the General Secretariat, contained in resolution AG/RES. 2314 (XXXVII-O/07), "Natural Disaster Reduction, Risk Management, and Assistance in Natural and Other Disaster Situations," as well as the recommendations to the member states contained in that resolution.

5. To request the General Secretariat to report to the General Assembly at its forty-first regular session on the implementation of this resolution, the execution of which shall be subject to the availability of financial resources in the program-budget of the Organization and other resources.