

Buenos Aires Declaration

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean participating in the Third Regional Meeting on Enhancing International Humanitarian Partnerships in Latin America and the Caribbean (EIHP), convened in Buenos Aires, Argentine Republic, June 17 and 18, 2010, Argentine, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Granada, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia and Uruguay; and the representatives of sub-regional disaster risk management organizations, CAPRADE, CDEMA, CEPREDENAC and REHU;

Reasserting International Humanitarian Assistance guiding principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, set out in United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 46/182 and 58/114, and regulations included in the Hyogo Framework for Action, recognizing the role of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in their promotion;

Acknowledging the urgent need to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change;

Considering consensus reached in the Declaration of Cancun of the Unity Summit, constituted by the 21st Summit of the Rio Group and the 2nd Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean on Integration and Development (CALC), in the Mayan Riviera, Mexico, February 23, 2010, particularly decisions on cooperation between regional and sub-regional mechanisms for integration; social development; eradication of hunger and poverty; food and nutritional security; climate change; and South-South cooperation, besides cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean; and discussions and conclusions of the First and Second Regional Meetings on Enhancing International Humanitarian Partnerships in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico City, September 10 - 11, 2008, and Florianopolis, Santa Catarina, September 2 - 4, 2009, respectively, as well as those developed and reached in this Third Regional Meeting;

Confident that affected states have the main responsibility for assistance coordination and effective response, and that respect for their sovereignty must be the framework for every International Humanitarian Assistance action;

Highlighting the important role of existing sub-regional mechanisms for humanitarian assistance and comprehensive risk management as the main actors: CAPRADE, CDEMA, CEPREDENAC, and REHU, members of the Forum on Coordination and Cooperation of Subregional Agencies for Disaster Risk Management in the Americas, and the importance of the group of countries that, without being officially part of them, actively contribute to the fulfillment of their goals;

Underscoring the work of the United Nations Systems, especially of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the meetings on EIHP, which enables the exchange of experiences, the attainment of consensus, and the search for specific tools for the strengthening of humanitarian assistance coordination;

Stressing the commitment of the Organization of the American States (OAS) to this topic, stated in its General Assembly Resolutions AG/RES 2372 (XXXVIII-O/08), AG/RES 2492 (XXXIX-O/09) y AG/RES 2610 (XL-O/10), and reflected in the appointment of a "Working Group on Existing Mechanisms for Disaster Prevention and Response and Humanitarian Assistance among the Member States";

Emphasizing also the efforts of international and regional organizations that, like the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), support countries and sub-regions in their advancement to humanitarian assistance coordination and disaster risk management;

Convinced that lessons learned from recent disasters in the Americas, including the ones suffered by Haiti and Chile and other socio-natural disasters that affected the region, reveal that the search for shared tools and the exchange of information constitute a priority in the regional agenda;

Persuaded that effective and prompt provision of humanitarian assistance to affected populations demands the development and materialization of coordination actions that facilitate the involvement of every actor, both from governments and civil society, and risk management volunteers;

Taking note of deliberations of the Third Regional Meeting on EIHP regarding the advancement towards the development of the virtual tool supported by the government of Brazil, the examples of a regional compendium of regulatory instruments and a foreign office procedure manual, and the need to develop tools for strengthening community participation;

Participants of the Third Regional Meeting on Enhancing International Humanitarian Partnerships in Latin America and the Caribbean

EXPRESS:

1. That in order to prevent the overlapping of efforts and enhance resources the commitment of countries to seek consensus and develop coordination tools, that consider existing initiatives will be required, as well as the adoption and implementation of proposed measures through relevant national actions.

2. That coordination will be enhanced with the strengthening of sub-regional organizations and mechanisms, and with the mutual exchange of experiences and good practices that lead to different scenarios with shared positions. To that end, all national efforts to strengthen their respective organizations, tools and mechanisms will be required.

3. That it would be beneficial that international organizations continue supporting assistance for the implementation of programs and projects, proposals for training and institutional strengthening, oriented to national, regional and sub-regional

mechanisms and their interconnection.

4. Their acknowledgment of the efforts of countries in the region to develop operational tools with the intention of presenting them to the organizers of the 4th Meeting, so that they consider adding them to the agenda and the following process of debate and consensus.

5. The convenience of developing and implementing sectoral initiatives within the context of Humanitarian Assistance, national, regional and sub-regional policies for humanitarian assistance management as a whole, and shared criteria for mobilizing human resources and ensure the quality of their performance, taking into account existing national and international standards recognized by States.

6. Their recommendation to establish a working group to follow up on proposals emerging from this 3rd Meeting, to be presented in the 4th Meeting. The working group will be made up by host countries of preceding meetings: Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, together with Ecuador, host country of next meeting; interested countries will also take part.

7. That they entrust the working group as from January 1, 2011 to follow up on the Virtual Tool proposed by Brazil in the 2nd Meeting on EIHP, debated and agreed in this meeting in Buenos Aires.

8. The need to encourage relevant authorities in the countries, consistent with their national structures, to stimulate the development or implementation of tools analyzed in this Meeting.

a. A request for the follow up group to collaborate, together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in sketching a Regional Compendium of Regulatory Instruments, which model was analyzed during this meeting on the basis of guidelines approved in the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 2007. The compendium will be worked on during a workshop to be held in the second semester this year, with a view to presenting progress made in the elaboration of Country Profiles in the next regional meeting.

b. Their support to progress made in the development of recommendations to elaborate a Foreign Office formal procedures or alternative structures for the articulation of International Humanitarian Assistance in the different countries that lack one.

c. Their commitment to outlining a proposal for an Operational Guide for humanitarian assistance based on existent guides, to be worked on during the 4th Meeting.

9. The importance of the supply management model (LSS/SUMA) for its analysis and following development as a sub-regional tool, as promoted by REHU.

10. The importance of promoting proposals to contribute to retrieving, reappraising, implementing and strengthening culturally relevant ancestral and contemporary knowledge and practices of native indigenous peoples and other ethnic groups, with community participation, that serve as input to elaborate public policies regarding disaster risk management and humanitarian assistance, to be presented in the meeting next year.

11. Their recommendation to organizers of the 4th meeting to analyze the relevance of envisaging comprehensive actions for socio-natural disaster risk reduction, humanitarian assistance, and socioeconomic development through participatory mechanisms that strengthen resilience and response capacities of local communities, for example food at school, to ensure basic rights, such as the right to education in situations of emergency and the right to food, highlighting the importance of local purchases for the sustainable provision of humanitarian assistance.

12. Their recognition of solidarity efforts of Latin America and the Caribbean to other peoples and regions affected by socio-natural disasters.

13. Their support to international campaign "Be a Better Donor", in order to guarantee that international humanitarian assistance is complementary to the efforts of the affected country and coordinated to them.

14. Their recommendation to countries to assess the appointment of INSARAG focal points to facilitate dialogue and the exchange of experiences in their respective subject matters at a regional and sub-regional level.

15. Their appreciation to the organizers and hosts of the 3rd Meeting, and their welcome to the decision of the Republic of Ecuador to host the 4th Regional Meeting on Enhancing International Humanitarian Partnerships (EIHP) during 2011.