

Quito Declaration

The participants to the Fourth Regional Meeting on Enhancing International Humanitarian Partnerships in Latin America and the Caribbean (EIHP), held in Quito, Republic of Ecuador, on April 26-27, 2011, and the representatives of sub-regional organizations, Cooperation and Coordination Forum, related to disaster management: Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Uruguay; and the representatives of sub-regional organizations related with risk management: CAPRADE, CDEMA, CEPREDENAC, REHU and the Cooperation and Coordination Forum;

Reasserting International Humanitarian Assistance guiding principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence agreed upon in the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions, especially 46/182 and 58/114, as well as the guidelines for risk reduction and preparedness and response established in the Hyogo Framework for Action, and recognizing the role of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA);

Celebrating that this year is the 20th anniversary of the adoption of Resolution 46/182 and recalling that it is a milestone for international humanitarian assistance coordination in the United Nations and the international community as a whole, through the establishment of institutions and the implementation of tools to tackle the needs of emergency victims;

Acknowledging the efforts made by the Member States, the United Nations System, especially OCHA and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and international humanitarian organizations in the strengthening of humanitarian assistance mechanisms;

Further recognizing the work done by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), specially for its efforts and willingness to provide technical assistance to interested countries, in matters related to the guidelines of the IDRL (International Disaster Response, Laws, Rules and Principles);

Recalling that, in the Cancun Agreements adopted in the framework of COP16 on climate change in December 2010, it was recognized that there was an urgent need to adopt measures of adaptation, including the establishment of an Adaptation Committee and a working plan that considers the existing connection between the adverse impacts of climate change, disaster risk management and measures to tackle the damages and losses caused by disasters;¹

Considering the consensus reached during the First, Second and Third Regional Meetings on Enhancing International Humanitarian Partnerships in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico City on September 10-11, 2008, in Florianopolis, Santa Catarina, on September 2-4, 2009, and in Buenos Aires on June 17-18, 2010;

¹ The Delegation of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, with reference to the present paragraph, undermines that it did not adopted the Cancun Agreement, hence it expresses reservation towards the referred paragraph.

Further considering the Agreement achieved 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);

Confident that affected States have the main responsibility for humanitarian assistance, coordination and effective response, and that International Humanitarian Assistance actions must fall within the framework of full respect for the sovereignty of States;

Stressing the need to reinforce national initiatives aimed at strengthening their relevant agencies, tools and mechanisms, as well as the role of existing sub-regional organizations in humanitarian assistance and in comprehensive risk management: CAPRADE, CDEMA, CEPREDENAC, REHU and the Forum for Coordination and Cooperation of Sub-regional Risk Management Mechanisms of Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the countries, that without being officially part of them, actively contribute to the fulfillment of their goals;

Welcoming the entry into force of the Constitutive Treaty of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and its potential contribution to immediate response mechanisms in socio-natural disasters, avoiding the duplication of regional efforts and bearing in mind lessons learned from other integration mechanisms such as SICA, CARICOM, CAN, CALC and MERCOSUR;

Stressing the commitment of the Organization of American States (OAS) and applauding the establishment of the “Working Group on Existing Mechanisms for Disaster Prevention and Response and Humanitarian Assistance among the Member States” and its efforts geared to designing an Inter-American Plan to Coordinate Disaster Prevention, Relief and Humanitarian Assistance that takes into account the existing national, regional, sub-regional, and multilateral mechanisms and *bodies* in order to seek complementarities, avoiding the duplication of efforts;

Recognizing the efforts undertaken by Latin America and the Caribbean in solidarity with other peoples and regions affected by socio-natural disasters and highlighting the work of the United Nations System, especially OCHA, in EIHP Meetings, which allow the exchange of experiences, consensus building and the search for specific tools directed to the strengthening of the humanitarian assistance coordination;

Convinced that effective and prompt provision of humanitarian assistance to the affected and most vulnerable populations requires the development and materialization of coordination actions that facilitate the involvement of every stakeholder, both from governments and civil society, and in particular volunteers involved in risk management;

Congratulating and acknowledging the efforts undertaken by the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil in the development of the Virtual Tool and its further development by the Follow-up Group, as agreed in the III EIHP Meeting;

Considering that communication with beneficiaries, allows the participation in the decision-making process that affects them, enhancing programs and services in the risk management of disasters directed to them;

Considering the deliberations of the Fourth Regional Meeting on EIHP the Participants;

1. Assert that, to prevent the overlapping of efforts and efficiency in the use of resources, the willingness of countries to seek consensus and develop coordination tools that consider existing initiatives, as well as the adoption and implementation of other measures, will be required, taking into account the resolutions adopted under the United Nations framework;

2. Encourages international organizations to continue providing assistance for the implementation of programs and projects, proposals for training and institutional strengthening, aimed at national, regional and sub-regional mechanisms;

3. Reiterates the advisability of developing and applying sectoral approach to Humanitarian Assistance, as well as national, regional and sub-regional humanitarian assistance management policies as a whole, and shared criteria for mobilizing resources and ensure the quality of their performance, taking into account existing national and international standards recognized by States;

4. Decides to extend the mandate of the Follow-up Group with respect to the proposals stemming from the Regional Meeting on Enhancing International Humanitarian Partnerships (EIHP), comprising former host countries of previous meetings, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Ecuador, together with Panama, in its capacity as host country of the forthcoming meeting and the representatives of sub-regional organizations involved with disaster risk management and its Coordination and Cooperation Forum. Participation in the Follow-up Group is open to international organizations upon request, in the understanding that this will facilitate the development and future application of the specific tools promoted by the EIHP;

5. Encourages the continuation of efforts to strengthen participation in EIHP;

6. Welcomes the interest of the Republic of Ecuador in advancing the development of coordination tools of humanitarian assistance and recommends the analysis of feasibility and sustainability of a Regional Situation Room and the development of a proposal to be presented at the 5th EIHP Meeting, appealing to the collaboration of countries, sub-regional organisms and international humanitarian organizations and in coordination with the Follow-up Group;

7. Encourage relevant authorities in the countries, in accordance with their national structures and capacities, to stimulate the development or implementation of the following tools:

a. Regional Compendium of Regulatory Instruments for the Management of International Humanitarian Assistance in Emergencies:

- The adopted model of Regional Compendium of Regulatory Instruments for the Management of International Humanitarian Assistance in Emergencies, renew the call to the Follow-up Group, under the responsibility of Argentina and Mexico, to continue the follow up of the process for the elaboration of the Regional Compendium of Regulatory Instruments for the Management of International Humanitarian Assistance in Emergencies to be presented at the 5th EIHP Meeting.
 - Further renew the call for technical support of the IFRC on the advising and capacity building for the completion of said Compendium.
 - Encourage States to designate national focal points for the follow-up process of the development of such Compendium, while committing to convene a regional workshop for its capacity-building, based on the logistical and technical aspects of the IFRC, subjected to the availability of resources.
 - A road-map will be developed for its completion;
- ~~a.~~b. Procedures for the Foreign Ministry of interested States or entities in charge of coordinating international humanitarian assistance and the further development of the tool in collaboration with the Follow-up Group and the technical support of PAHO;
- ~~b.~~c. Operational Guide for international Humanitarian Assistance: Invite the sub-regional forum to initiate the evaluation process and analysis of the sub-regional mechanisms related to the operational aspects of the international Humanitarian Assistance offered by CAPRADE and CEPREDENAC under the Coordination and Cooperation Forum for the sub-regions, fed by national inputs and the analysis of the guidelines elaborated under international organizations such as OCHA, PAHO and IFRC, and to present its findings during the 5th EIHP Meeting;
- ~~e.~~d. Regional Virtual Information Tool: Transfer the management of the regional virtual information tool from Brazil to Ecuador, which will be in charge of the pilot project up to the Fifth EIHP and the presentation of its functioning. Bolivia, Brazil and Ecuador volunteer to participate in the project with the collaboration of OCHA and PAHO;
- ~~d.~~e. Government Guide and Organizations and Resources Directory: Call for the support of OCHA and those interested governments, in the diffusion or update, as referral documents that will contribute to the enhancement in the coordination of humanitarian assistance;

8.- This Meeting takes note of the Sub-regional Mechanisms recognition of the ongoing actions that REHU has done in order to establish a Regional Unified Device at a MERCOSUR level for the supply management of humanitarian inputs in the event of disasters, as a potential reference in the establishment of common tools, enabling the standardization of procedures in disasters, and agree to contact the coordination of technical meetings meant to gather information and obtain training in order to submit reports on its specific progress at the 5th EIHP Meeting;

9.-Reiterate the invitation to Member States of the Region that have specific institutions related to the thematic of native indigenous peoples and other ethnic groups to present their

proposals and experiences that can contribute to retrieving, reappraising, implementing and strengthening culturally relevant ancestral and contemporary knowledge, practices and organizational forms, with community participation, as inputs in the elaboration of public policies related to the management of risks of disasters, compilation to be presented at the 5th EIHP Meeting;

10. Reiterates 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, to ensure respect for human rights during emergencies, particularly the rights to health, education, food and to a life free from violence;

11.- Reiterates the need for Member States, the United Nations System, and further international, regional and sub-regional organizations related to humanitarian assistance, to mainstreaming gender perspective in their humanitarian assistance provision, with priority to the needs of women, girls, boys and men in a broad and systematic manner;

12.- Urges Member States to promote strengthening of the volunteer corps systems, in accordance with their national legislation, and improving volunteer action capacities at all levels, ensuring the rights of volunteers;

13.- Supports the international “Be a Better Donor” campaign, in order to guarantee that international humanitarian assistance is complementary to, and coordinated with, the efforts of the affected country, as well as its coordination. Accordingly, we further support the international campaign “Building Resilient Cities: My City is Getting Ready”, of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

14.- Welcomes the designation of the INSARAG focal points in most of the region’s countries and urges them to analyze the models for the establishment of national, sub-regional and regional Groups of urban search and rescue (USAR), in accordance with each State’s capacity and regulatory framework and taking into account international standards;

15.- Encourages Members States and humanitarian organizations to include communication, in a coordinating manner, with possible beneficiaries, in their action plans, taking into consideration that it will enhance their participation in the process of risk management, while contributing to the processes of management and accountability, improving the efficacy of humanitarian actions.

16.- Expresses their appreciation to the Government of Ecuador for the organization of the Fourth Meeting and welcomes the decision of the Government of the Republic of Panama, to host the Fifth Regional Meeting on Enhancing International Humanitarian Partnerships (EIHP) in 2012.

Quito, April 27th, 2011.