

AG/RES. 2915 (XLVIII-O/18)

COORDINATION OF VOLUNTEERS IN THE HEMISPHERE IN RESPONSE TO DISASTERS
AND THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER AND POVERTY – WHITE HELMETS INITIATIVE

(Adopted at the second plenary session, held on June 4, 2018)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

HAVING SEEN the reports of the General Secretariat on the White Helmets Initiative, resolutions AG/RES. 1351 (XXV-O/95), AG/RES. 1403 (XXVI-O/96), AG/RES. 1463 (XXVII-O/97), AG/RES. 2018 (XXXIV-O/04), AG/RES. 2165 (XXXVI-O/06), AG/RES. 2372 (XXXVIII-O/08), AG/RES. 2558 (XL-O/10), AG/RES. 2704 (XLII-O/12), AG/RES. 2827 (XLIV-O/14), AG/RES. 2881 (XLVI-O/16), AG/RES. 2904 (XLVII-O/17), and CIDI/RES. 322 (LXXIII-O/17), and declarations AG/DEC. 45 (XXXV-O/05) and AG/DEC. 55 (XXXVII-O/07);

REAFFIRMING the guiding principles of international humanitarian assistance, namely, humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and operational independence; and the primary and foremost responsibility of the state to prevent and reduce disaster risk and to assist and protect disaster victims;

BEARING IN MIND that the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in March 2015, in the city of Sendai, Japan, recognizes the need for a broader and more people-centered preventive approach to disaster risk and that disaster risk management contributes to sustainable development;

BEARING IN MIND the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development 2016-2021 (PIDS), adopted in resolution AG/RES. 2882 (XLVI-O/16), and the Inter-American Plan for Disaster Prevention and Response and the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, adopted in resolution AG/RES. 2750 (XLII-O/12);

TAKING NOTE of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the UN General Assembly at its September 2015 session, and the results of the World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul, in May 2016;

RECALLING the progress made by the Regional and Global Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in March and May 2017, in Montreal, Canada, and Cancun, Mexico, respectively;

EMPHASIZING the progress made by the member states, the inter-American system, and international agencies, international organizations, and international entities in connection with risk management and the coordination of humanitarian assistance;

RECOGNIZING the advancements made by the subregional mechanisms: Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPRENAC), Andean Committee for Disaster the Prevention and Relief (CAPRADE), the Southern Common Market's Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management (RMAGIR/MERCOSUR), and the

Union of South American Nations High-Level Working Group for Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management (GTANGRD/UNASUR); as well as the coordination among them;

EMPHASIZING the importance of promoting regional, national, and local capacity-building in the area of the environment and its link to disaster risk reduction and resilience;

CONFIRMING the importance of continuing to promote regional, national, and local measures for disaster prevention and response, according priority to groups in vulnerable situations, such as women, children, older people, and persons with disabilities, among others;

REITERATING the need to continue carrying out disaster risk reduction operations, striving to prevent duplication of effort, encouraging resource optimization through the use of existing coordination tools, and facilitating synergy among humanitarian efforts in the region;

RECALLING FURTHER that the White Helmets Initiative continues to carry out its activities through a working model based on cooperation, solidarity, and community participation; that it is entirely civilian and relies on a volunteer corps; that this Initiative acts at the request of the affected country or in response to an appeal for international humanitarian assistance and provides its support as an immediate response to disasters, as well as in rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development efforts. It also promotes prevention, disaster risk management, and resilient communities;

HAILING the Framework Agreement between the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States and the White Helmets Commission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Argentine Republic on Disaster Risk Management, Increased Resilience, and International Humanitarian Assistance, signed on September 28, 2017, the purpose of which is to collaborate with and support member states with implementation of international and hemispheric frameworks, formation of national volunteer systems, and coordination of international humanitarian assistance;

UNDERSCORING the Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding that White Helmets signed between 2016 and 2018 with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), the Center for the Coordination of Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC), with CDEMA, with the Ministry of the Interior and Land Development of the Republic of El Salvador, the National Disaster Prevention, Mitigation, and Response System (SINAPRED) of the Republic of Nicaragua, and with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Panama to support the Regional Logistics Center for Humanitarian Assistance (CLRAH), among others;

EMPHASIZING the adoption of resolution CIDI/RES. 322 (LXXIII-O/17), which designates the White Helmets Special Fund as a “Humanitarian Fund,” under which all of the resources it is allocated can be used to pursue humanitarian assistance activities in the Hemisphere;

EXPRESSING ITS SATISFACTION at the humanitarian assistance provided by the White Helmets Initiative, through missions in which volunteers and/or humanitarian supplies have been dispatched to The Bahamas, Belize, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Dominica, Ecuador, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru, in the aftermath of fires, hurricanes, floods, droughts, and earthquakes between 2014 and 2017;

EMPHASIZING the projects and training workshops conducted by the White Helmets Initiative for local volunteers and to strengthen communities in Jamaica, Dominica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador; and

RECOGNIZING that the activities carried out by the White Helmets Initiative are in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the Organization of American States, are carried out at the request of the affected state in close collaboration with the relevant national authorities, and are governed in accordance with the principles of humanitarian assistance,

RESOLVES:

1. To reiterate its support for the White Helmets Initiative as one of the valuable mechanisms in the Hemisphere for disaster prevention, reduction, and response and in the fight against hunger and poverty.

2. To encourage the White Helmets Initiative to continue fostering the growing regional humanitarian collaboration and, in that context, to continue sharing its experience and best practices in disaster prevention, preparedness, and response.

3. To encourage the General Secretariat to continue strengthening and coordinating action between the White Helmets Initiative and the Secretariat for Integral Development, as well as with other bodies and mechanisms of the Organization of American States, facilitating the establishment of partnerships and working agreements between other organizations and institutions in the region and the White Helmets Initiative, in accordance with and subject to the Guidelines for the Participation of Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities, preserving at all times the scope, principles, and responsibilities of the different forms of relationship created.

4. To entrust the General Secretariat and White Helmets Initiative with the task of continuing to explore joint humanitarian assistance activities in member states that so request, based on identified needs, building on the positive experience of the OAS-WH Mission deployed in Dominica to support the water resilience systems that were affected by Hurricane Maria.

5. To reiterate the invitation for member states to make contributions to the OAS-White Helmets Humanitarian Fund, so they can continue seminars and training workshops on disaster risk reduction and the execution of capacity-building projects in areas related to resilience, disaster risk prevention and mitigation, and international humanitarian assistance.

6. To request the General Secretariat to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first regular session, on implementation of this resolution. Execution of the activities envisaged in this resolution will be subject to the availability of financial resources in the program-budget of the Organization and other resources.