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Sistema Económico
Latino-Americano e do Caribe

Système Economique
Latinoaméricain et Caribéen



Conclusions and Recommendations

Economic and Technical Cooperation

*Regional Seminar "Partnerships between public and private sectors for disaster risk management:
Continuity of government and continuity of operations during disasters"*

Lima, Peru

7 and 8 June 2012

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Regional Seminar “ *Partnerships between public and private sectors for disaster risk management: Continuity of government and continuity of operations during disasters*” – organized by the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), jointly with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, Regional Office - The Americas (UNISDR – The Americas), the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (USAID/OFDA), and the government of Peru, through the National Institute of Civil Defence (INDECI) and the National Centre of Estimation, Prevention and Disaster Risk Reduction (CENEPRED) – was held on 7 and 8 June 2012, in Lima, Peru.
2. Participants expressed their appreciation to the authorities of the national systems for disaster risk management, the representatives of subregional, regional and international agencies in charge of this area and private sector representatives for the presentations made in the Regional Seminar. This activity was foreseen in the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) and the United Nations, through the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, Regional Office - The Americas (UNISDR – The Americas), with the purpose of promoting cooperation and coordination in the area of disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean for the period 2011-2015, focusing on cooperation projects between governments and the private sector.
3. In the course of the debate and exchange of views on public and private sector partnerships for disaster risk management – specifically on continuity of government and continuity of business operations in case of disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean – there was consensus on the following aspects:
 - a) Reviewed cases showed that natural disasters risk management requires adopting a preventive approach that includes the participation and collective and coordinated efforts of governments and other social actors. Hence, the relevance of continuing to deal with the issues of continuity of government and continuity of business operations, while encouraging the creation of partnerships between the public and private sectors in this area.
 - b) Recent adverse events – particularly the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile – have evidenced the need to address continuity of government as a priority and, consequently, to outline contingency and prevention plans that enable the various national governmental institutions to keep their action strategies up-to-date to face disasters. Those plans should include other social actors, such as the private sector, who could complement and support government action.
 - c) It is very important for public-private partnerships for risk management to count on inventories so as to know in advance the amount of resources available to any given country to confront disasters and to be able to mobilize them in an efficient and timely manner, in accordance with national development plans. To this end, it is essential to generate spaces for an open, cooperative and transparent dialogue.

- d) Participants agreed on the importance of making progress on the evaluation of the social, economic and environmental impacts of disasters, in order to measure their costs and losses in terms of the economic and social development of countries, and raise awareness about this subject.
- e) Participants also underscored the need to move forward in including the risk variable in projects involving public and private investments, as a tool to promote investment security and protection.
- f) The presentations, as well as the best practices discussed, made evident the enormous potential of the private sector in supporting and complementing government actions before, during and after the occurrence of a disaster, and show the degree of development, responsibility and commitment of private enterprises as regards risk management in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- g) Whether or not private enterprises can continue their operations and activities in case of a disaster substantially affects the economic recovery of the affected country.
- h) Standards, certifications and norms for continuity of business operations adopted by enterprises in the region allow for envisaging risk management actions and for building resilience in the private sector, thereby contributing to provide security and protection to workers, properties, goods and services. These standards and norms promoted in the private sector are powerful tools to raise awareness among companies and promote a corporate risk management culture.
- i) The experiences analyzed highlight the complementarity and coincidence of interests, as well as the possibility of forging harmonious partnerships between the public and private sectors, as evidenced by partnership initiatives and business networks for disaster prevention and response already underway in the region.
- j) Regional and subregional business associations are a powerful communication tool to promote risk management among its members. In each subregion, a space for joint work can be developed with national and subregional government institutions specialized in disaster risk reduction. Advantage should be taken of this with a view to promoting progress as well as economic and social well-being.
- k) The experiences gained in this regional meeting and in previous events on the issue of public-private partnerships for disaster risk reduction lead us to the conclusion that there are clear reasons to promote the participation of the private sector in the area of disaster risk reduction, such as in the specific examples used to illustrate this type of participation.
- l) As evidenced by those experiences – which are far from being homogeneous – the motives and ways in which public and/or private stakeholders approach to the issue of disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean are very diverse. Thus, efforts are focused on promoting various aspects, namely: a) security of staff and investments in case of disaster; b) optimization of the traditional solidarity and support that companies often provide to communities affected by disasters; c) minimizing the levels of exposure to disaster risk both for infrastructure and private facilities and for their operational environment; and d) sustainability of investments made by private entities as part of their social and/or sustainable

development portfolios, among others. It must be acknowledged that all these approaches are useful, valid, complementary and convenient, because all of them can serve to make important contributions to ongoing disaster risk reduction efforts in our region.

- m) Changes in regional commitments, standards and institutions in the region, in pursuit of a more comprehensive treatment of disaster risk management, lead us to redouble our efforts to generate mechanisms in order to promote corrective and prospective risk management among private stakeholders. Such efforts must be understood and supported in line with their high profitability potential, without affecting the commitments of stakeholders to strengthen their preparedness and response capacities vis-à-vis disasters.
- n) Participants reiterated the validity of the “Statement of Commitment by the Private Sector for Disaster Prevention, Resilience and Risk Reduction” and the importance of further developing the “Private Sector Partnership for Disaster Risk Reduction”, promoted by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, Regional Office - The Americas (UNISDR – The Americas).
- o) Due account was taken of the agreements reached at the V Regional Meeting on International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance (MIAH), set forth in the Panama Declaration and the V-MIAH Action Plan, which reiterate the importance and priority of “encouraging strategic partnerships with the private sector for disaster risk reduction.” Participants also reaffirmed the commitment to submit the conclusions and recommendations stemming from this regional seminar to the Pro-Tempore Presidency of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (CELAC) and other related organizations.
- p) Participants took note of the closed meeting of the Forum on Coordination and Cooperation of Subregional Mechanisms in charge of Disaster Risk Management in the Americas, which took place within the framework of this regional seminar. The event was coordinated by the co-sponsors of the seminar, in compliance with the agreements reached at the “V Regional Meeting on International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance” to provide the necessary support to Latin American and Caribbean institutions in charge of disaster risk reduction, particularly to conduct that regional forum.
- q) In addition, participants took note of the actions to promote public-private partnerships undertaken by subregional institutions (CEPREDENAC, CAPRADE, REHU and CDEMA). They also underscored the importance of fostering relations with the private sector and other stakeholders in order to face the challenges posed by risk management and adaptation to climate change.
- r) Emphasis was made on the various regulations and standards that have been adopted by the private sector to strengthen prevention and ensure continuity of business operations in case of disasters. Participants agreed on the need for national focal points in charge of disaster risk reduction and the private sector to further disseminate information about those instruments, which have an enormous potential to help enterprises to outline strategies, as well as preventive contingency plans and actions, in case of disasters.

- s) Participants also highlighted the importance of regional development banks fully engaging themselves in support of disaster risk reduction, and of adopting a prospective and comprehensive approach to ensure harmonious and sustainable development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following are the recommendations stemming from the Regional Seminar:

1. To continue to encourage countries to adhere to the agreements and priorities set forth in the "Statement of Commitment by the Private Sector for Disaster Prevention, Resilience and Risk Reduction" and to further develop the "Private Sector Partnership for Disaster Risk Reduction", being promoted by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), jointly with the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and other regional and subregional organizations participating in those initiatives.

2. To take note of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, Regional Office - The Americas (UNISDR – The Americas) proposed "Disaster Risk Reduction Private Sector Partnership" (DRR-PSP), aimed at promoting disaster risk reduction through the implementation of the five essentials adopted at the global level by the Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG) within the framework of the Global Platform for DRR promoted by the UNISDR in 2011: a) Promote and develop public-private partnerships for disaster risk reduction; b) Leverage sectoral private sector expertise and strengths to advance disaster risk reduction and mitigation activities, including enhanced resilience, preparedness and effective response; c) Foster a collaborative exchange and dissemination of data between the public and private sectors: Share information on assessment, monitoring, prediction, forecasting and early warning; d) Support national and local risk assessments and socio-economic cost-benefit analyses and capacity-building, and demonstrate opportunities where resilience building and disaster risk reduction is a sound economic strategy, with attractive returns and competitive advantages; and e) Support the development and strengthening of national and local laws, regulations, policies and programmes that enhance disaster risk reduction and improve resilience. To this end, the DRR-PSP shall elect a representative of the private sector and a deputy representative for the Americas, who will guide the goals of the DRR-PSP, along with SELA and the UNISDR. The elected representatives will establish links with the Disaster Risk Reduction Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG), promoted by the UNISDR at the global level. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, Regional Office - The Americas (UNISDR – The Americas) will serve as Technical Secretariat of the DRR-PSP by supporting the process to establish the Alliance and to make strides with the activities prioritized by the DRR-PSP.

3. In the area of cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk management, some priority areas of interest were identified, which could be addressed in future meetings and activities. They include: social responsibility associated with disaster risk reduction, incentives for enterprises to join public-private partnerships for risk management, as well as the analysis and assessment of the impact of disasters on the private sector, among others.

4. Emphasis was made on the need for the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, with the support of USAID/OFDA, to continue to promote the rapprochement with regional and subregional business associations, chambers of commerce and industry, and representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises, with the purpose of identifying

allies in the private sector interested in risk management so as to define areas for joint work and promote exchanges of information and best practices.

The delegations thanked the government of Peru, through the National Institute of Civil Defence (INDECI) and the National Centre of Estimation, Prevention and Disaster Risk Reduction (CENEPRED), as well as the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, Regional Office - The Americas (UNISDR – The Americas), and the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (USAID/OFDA), for organizing and supporting this regional seminar.