



# Rapporteur's Report

## Social Development

*Workshop for the Construction of Strategic Guidelines for Disaster Risk Management in Latin America and the Caribbean*

*Buenos Aires, Argentina*

*June 6-7, 2023*

*SP/TCLEGRDMPT-SELA/IR-23*

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Workshop for the Construction of Strategic Guidelines for Disaster Risk Management in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) was held on June 6 and 7, 2023, at the San Martin Palace in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It brought together a group of focal points from member and associate countries of Mercosur, as well as States part of SELA, except for Brazil, in disaster risk management. Additionally, it had the participation of representatives of the Argentinian government, and technical bodies operating at various levels, both at the national and provincial levels.

The objectives of the workshop were: a) to generate a space for discussion and training on the status of risk management in LAC and its main challenges in the context of post-pandemic recovery; b) to provide recommendations on the thematic areas and opportunities for multilateral action related to Integrated Disaster Risk Management in LAC; and c) to identify cross-cutting elements to be included in the potential Strategic Guidelines that will guide actions for the preparation of a Protocol on Integrated Disaster Risk Management (IDRM).

## **II. DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEETING**

In general terms, it is considered that the analysis and messages of the regional diagnosis were recognized by the workshop participants. The discussion delved into the particularities that each country identified in their domestic environment, regarding the regional reading of the current challenges of risk management, and the potential trends identified in the region. A highlight of the meeting was the shared concern regarding the variations in disaster risk patterns associated with hydrometeorological phenomena and the impacts that are being registered in different infrastructure portfolios; likewise, the direct impact these have on strategic productive activities for the development of the countries, which is strongly compromising the efforts to increase resilience. It was also stated that, among these new post-pandemic risk patterns, the fiscal collection capacity of governments and the contraction of the economy will have a weight of consideration in restructuring the disaster risk management agenda. Furthermore, important progress was made in the consolidation of national risk management systems in each country, both at the regulatory and institutional levels. Finally, concerning the analytical capacities of the countries to improve knowledge and understanding of disaster risks; a significant effort was identified in terms of the need to generate capacities at the local government and administration levels, as well as at the regional level.

Another important point was that the countries commented on the progress they have made in incorporating actors in the area through different mechanisms: national platforms, intersectoral roundtables, focal points, and sectoral operations centers, among others. However, they recognize the difficulty in convening entities related to the areas of industry, trade, and tourism. With respect to information systems, despite the compilation each country makes of the data of damages and losses, and whose robustness varies according to each country, they recognize the need to articulate the different information systems that the region has, especially in transboundary regions.

The session on Financial Transfer of Disaster Risk, linked to the presentation on the *CELAC Fund Initiative for Climate Adaptation and Comprehensive Disaster Response*, generated a space for exchange in which countries presented some progress in this area.

However, it can be deduced from the debate that, even though this is a topic that has been promoted in the region for more than 15 years, there is still room for countries, individually and collectively, to

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explore the use of the various tools and mechanisms for financial protection and macroeconomic shielding against the impact of disasters. It was recognized that the fiscal and economic situation of the countries of the region, still dealing with the challenges of post-pandemic economic recovery, limits the availability of resources to prioritize this type of agenda. However, it is clear the interest shown in learning more about the alternatives that the market offers for the acquisition of these products and the identification of needs to be met so that countries can acquire them under better commercial conditions.

### **Main Topics of Interest**

Three topics were highlighted as being of particular interest to the participants:

- *Operation and access to international funds for disaster risk management.* As a result of ECLAC's presentation and the recognition of the weakness of the mechanisms to promote effective risk reduction, the countries showed a clear interest in learning about the mechanisms and supply of this type of funds that can support some activities on risk management and adaptation to climate change. The identification of the supply of these financing mechanisms, as well as guidance on application processes, were aspects of interest expressed by the focal points of the different countries.
- *Financial transfer of disaster risk.* Countries are clearly interested in learning more about the possibilities for creating or improving the performance of their financial protection schemes in the event of disasters. The presentation by Salvador Perez, World Bank consultant and CEO of the consulting firm Legarisk, offered an overview of the possibilities offered by financial markets and organizations to transfer significant portions of the disaster risk concentrated in infrastructure portfolios. Actions to better understand the contingent liabilities of countries was an area of particular interest to participants.
- *Definition of multilateral actions around the disaster risk management agenda.* The countries recognize the value of multilateral work to address the current challenges of disaster risk. In this connection, it was recognized the role and value of the United Nations Regional Action Plan (RAP) has as a guiding document for hemispheric action on this matter. On this basis, the countries expressed their interest in defining specific mechanisms for interaction among the Member States of SELA which, considering the agreements reached in the RAP, could develop more specific activities within the scope of the mandates and activities that SELA has been developing.

### **Requests from the Countries**

At the end of the workshop, three main requests were expressed by the member states at the close of the event.

*Avoid duplication.* Regarding the guidelines and protocols initiative under discussion, the countries expressed the need to not to duplicate efforts or replicate regional instruments. They recommend considering the latest version of the RAP, approved during the Regional Platform of the UNDRR Americas in Punta del Este last February 2023, as a guiding document to be used as a reference document.

2023, as a guiding document to be considered to define the activities in DRM that SELA promotes with its Member States.

- *Generate training spaces.* In line with SELA's substantive activities, the countries expressed their interest in participating in training spaces that address the topics of interest highlighted during the workshop, as well as others that may arise in the short term. They recognized the need to strengthen the institutional framework. The need to promote the exchange of institutional practices to strengthen the performance of national DRM systems, the opportunities offered by financial protection and the development of capacities for the generation of information and analysis on disaster risk were the main topics highlighted.
- *Facilitate multilateral interaction within SELA.* Participants recognized the value of generating opportunities for exchanges, both virtual and face-to-face, to continue strengthening multilateral work in the thematic area convened by SELA.

### **III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROCESS CONTINUITY**

Considering the process of defining guidelines, and establishing a regional protocol on DRM, as well as the indications of the representatives of the countries, it is recommended that the protocol document be based on the thematic intersections between the RAP and the activities defined in SELA's Work Plan. On these topics, the procedures for work, training, and exchange among the Member States are defined, as well as the focus on the priority topics resulting from both the diagnosis and the workshop.