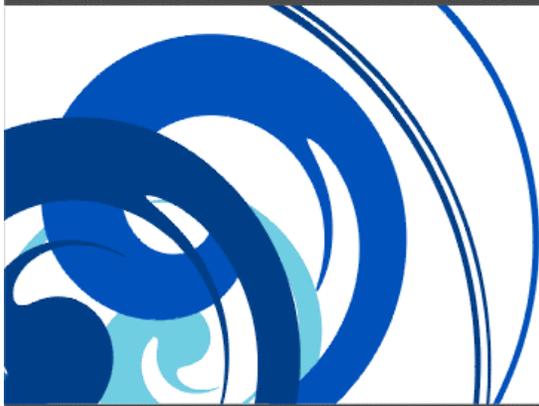




Mitch+5

Mitch+5 Regional Forum Report



Central America
April - December 2003

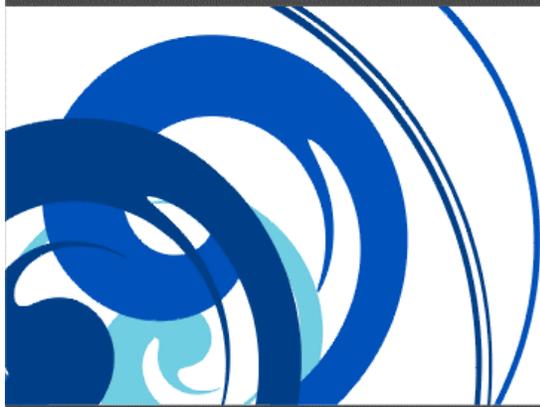
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
December 9, 10 and 11, 2003





Mitch+5

**Mitch+5
Regional Forum Report**



Central America
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December 9, 10 and 11, 2003

First Edition, 2004

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To all the Internal Cooperation Organizations, Government Institutions, Civil Society, Non-Government Organizations, international and cooperation agencies, from all Central America and Europe, and from single countries like Colombia, Cuba, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, the Netherlands, and the United States of America, who gave support to the Regional and national forums.

PRESENTATION

Far from diminishing, disasters in the Central American region have progressively increased in the last three decades, with an annual growth of 5%. From 101 catastrophic events in the 1970-1980 decade, 418 events occurred from 1980 to the year 2000. According to the economic estimates that have been made by regional and international institutions¹, From 1970 to 2002, the economic loss caused by disasters in the region has exceeded 10 thousand million dollars, which is tantamount to stating that in the last 32 years, the region has lost an annual average upward of 318 Million Dollars, it having sustained losses equivalent to 30% of the region's GNP with the passing of Mitch.

We can ask ourselves if this increase in the number of catastrophic events has been caused by an unusual increase in the occurrence of extraordinary physical events in the region, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, heavy rains, volcano eruptions, etc. The answer is definitely no. On the other hand, we can affirm that this increase is closely related to the construction habits of our societies, which cause:

- The concentration in risk zones of highly vulnerable social groups who have little economic resources to tolerate the impact of disasters and recover from their effects.
- The inappropriate use of land and the establishment of human settlements in areas that are vulnerable to threat, such as river slopes and wetlands, combined with fragile and unstable living conditions and little social infrastructure and services.
- The impoverishment of rural areas and the progressive increase of threat levels through environmental degradation processes.
- A weak capacity for risk reduction and management in development processes on the part of public and private institutions as well as national and local.

Indeed, if one takes a look at the region, one can see urbanization processes characterized by anarchy and their poor adaptation to the physical restrictions of the environment, which results in high threat levels for most of the human settlements whose vulnerabilities has been evident in previous disasters.

Another common point in the region is that the transformation processes of the territory are viewed in a short-term perspective, with little identification of existing disaster risk and potential future scenarios. This lack of prospective vision increases the dimensions of extensions of territory and the number of people exposed to socio-natural threats.

An additional factor that has a bearing on the occurrence of disasters is the impoverishment of rural areas, which affects a large part of the Central American population, whose living conditions have been deteriorated and who depend on complex subsistence strategies, such as seasonal migration or the money sent by relatives who live in the cities or abroad. Very often the poorest inhabitants depend on precarious and fragile means of subsistence in areas exposed to drought, floods and other threats. Also, local ecological and environmental changes caused by agriculture can create their own risks. For example, deforestation frequently used to make way for agricultural production regularly causes soil erosion, the loss of nutrients in the earth and can, at long term, affect agriculture. Besides, in some cases, these processes are the direct cause of new floods, droughts, fires or landslides.

¹ Studies conducted by the ECLAC, the IDB and the Association of Caribbean States, among others.

Globalization is another element that adds risks in the region. Favoring rapid growth in some areas and marginalizing others, brings about an increase in the levels of dependency of some geographic zones. Even the most remote rural communities are linked to world economy and the means of subsistence are vulnerable to fluctuations in the global price of basic products. This situation is magnified when natural disasters coincide with a drop in the prices of basic products. An example of this accumulation of risks in the region is the drought that has parched the land in Central America in the last few years, which added to the drop in coffee prices and rural impoverishment, has generated situations of extreme vulnerability in rural areas of Nicaragua, Guatemala and Honduras.

All the above takes us to consider how development models in the region have been designed and maintained; although these models undoubtedly achieve economic growth at short term, they bring about transformation processes of the territory that entail a tremendous cost in terms of risk accumulation because no studies are carried out in order to guarantee that the development actions performed in the region won't be generating further risks and threats.

In the last two decades, risk reduction has been one of the concerns of governments and the civil society in the region as well as the international community. Progressively, vulnerability reduction is seen as an element linked to sustainable development and is now a very important point in the regional development agenda. During this period, the number of political instruments has increased, such as presidential declarations, regional and national strategies and programs, and institutional mechanisms for the risk reduction, thereby increasing the number of actors connected to this theme. Likewise, the Coordination Center for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC) was established as a specialized regional entity belonging to the Central American Integration System (SICA). Especially, after the impact of Hurricane Mitch many programs and projects supported by multilateral and bilateral entities and NGOs have surfaced, which programs are intended for sectoral development institutions, local governments and the civil society, as also for institutions specialized in emergency preparedness and management.

Within this context the "Regional Risk Management Program" was born, developed by CEPREDENAC with the support of UNDP. This Program completes at the regional level a set of national projects supported by the UNDP and other actors, within the scope of the "Strategic Framework for Vulnerability and Disaster Reduction in Central America". The objective of the program is to strengthen and reinforce capacities for disasters risk management in the region, favoring the extraction of lessons learned from the principal local initiatives undertaken after Mitch, as well as the development of methodologies in order to incorporate the risk factor into key planning sectors.

The program is based on the following assumptions:

- Risk management cannot be limited to punctual interventions upon the occurrence of an event, and we cannot expect development institutions not to take responsibility for risk management. More accurately, risk management is about a permanent process in the reduction of existing and future risks that must take place within the framework of development actions.
- It is not possible to deal with disaster reduction in a centralized manner. We must be capable of managing risks at different levels and from the different development sectors, without losing sight of the local scene, because even regional events like

Mitch can be viewed as the result of hundreds of small disasters and it is basically from the development processes at their different sectoral and territorial levels, that we can manage risks more effectively. In spite of the fact that risks appear in given places, the real causes are often found beyond those areas, which is why it is necessary to intervene at a national, regional and even global level.

- The success and failure of these interventions in risk management can help us to find lessons that will enable us to better orient any future actions.

This is where this document stands, which is the result of a participatory process developed from April to December 2003, through national workshops and forums of analysis and proposals in the different countries of the Central American region. These processes ended with the Mitch +5 Regional Forum, which took place from December 9-11 in the city of Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The forum brought together people from different sectors of the government and the civil society, as well as international organizations, in order to jointly consider and study the different advances obtained in risk management in the last five years, and at the same time it set up the conditions for the confluence of different regional proposals so that future development actions can contribute to stop the process of accumulation of disaster risk.

The reports prepared by the countries and the discussions that were carried out at the thematic and plenary roundtables of the regional forum showed:

- Growing awareness in the region as to the need to reduce the existing risk levels.
- Efforts and progress made by the countries, mainly regarding the formulation and drafting of policies, programs and projects aimed at understanding and monitoring risks, strengthening capacities for the local level risk management, emergency management and with respect to the development of sectoral plans and strategies for vulnerability reduction.

However, it was also admitted that in spite of the aforementioned advances some weaknesses and obstacles related to high levels of existing vulnerabilities persist, which are connected to the high levels of poverty in the region, social disintegration and insecurity, inadequate management of natural resources, environmental degradation and the disorganized growth of human settlements.

Hence, some of the main recommendations of the Regional Forum are:

- Updating the Strategic Framework for Vulnerability and Disaster Reduction;
- Updating, enunciating and adopting State policies and national plans and strategies;
- Increasing efforts to adopt the necessary policies, strategies and mechanisms so that the inclusion of risk analysis and management could be truly indispensable requirements in the planning of all public and private activities for the local, national and regional development of Central America.
- Asking national public investment systems and international financing organizations to require risk analyses of the projects submitted to their consideration.
- Increasing efforts to reinforce a broad institutional participation in the prevention, mitigation and response to disasters, from a systemic, integral and inter-sectoral approach, through the revision and modernization of legal frameworks.

- Stimulate land planning and utilization processes that have a preventive approach, as a fundamental tool to prevent the generation of new risks and reduce the existing ones, and to increase local decentralization, ensuring the transfer of powers and resources for the integral risk management
- Request that the commitment and support of Central American countries and regional organizations, governmental cooperation agencies, civil society organizations and international organizations with regard to CEPREDENAC must be strengthened, with the purpose of maximizing and optimizing the integration and development of national capacities for vulnerability and disaster reduction in Central America

The report of this forum is the document presented below.

Before ending this presentation, we would like to add that we are especially grateful to all the institutions that participated in the national forums and that assisted us in preparing the national reports, as well as to those who participated in the Regional Forum and who shared their experience and made contributions in the preparation of the regional conclusions.

Through the publication of this document we trust in having put at the disposal of persons and institutions the results of this process, which show the advances obtained and the challenges yet to come for the region in terms of risk management, and we hope they are accepted by the rulers, civil society and population of Central America as their own. We also expect that international agencies take these results as a reference for determining the type of cooperation that they wish to give to this region in the near future, without losing sight of the impact of disasters in the development of the region. If the actual risk conditions remain constant the projections indicate that for the year 2014 the number of disasters will be doubled.



Elizabeth Fong
Resident Representative of UNDP Panama



Luis Gómez Barahona
Vice-President of CEPREDENAC and
COPECO's National Commissioner



Gerónimo Giusto-Robelo
Executive Secretary of CEPREDENAC

ACRONYMS

ACS - AEC	Association of Caribbean States
ASONOG	Association of NGOs, Honduras
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
CABEI	Central American Bank for Economic Integration
CATHALAC	Water Center for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean
CEAH	Center of Environmental Studies in Honduras
CEPREDENAC	Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America
CIPS	Center of Health Supplies - Nicaragua
CNE	National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Response - Costa Rica
COCIGER	Civil Convergence for Risk Management - Guatemala
CODE	Disaster Operations Center - Managua
CODEL	Local Emergency Committee - Honduras
CODEM	Municipal Emergency Committee -Honduras
COEN	National Emergency Committee – El Salvador
CONRED	National Disaster Reduction Coordinator, Guatemala
CONSAN	National Council for Alimentary and Nutritional Security, Guatemala
COPECO	Permanent Commission of Contingencies - Honduras
CRID	Regional Disaster Information Center, Latin America and the Caribbean
CRRH	Regional Committee of Hydraulic Resources
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DIPECHO	Disaster Preparedness ECHO
DIRDN	International Decennia for Natural Disaster Reduction
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
FHIS	Honduran Fund for Social Investment
FRGR	Regional Forum for Risk Management in Central America
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IGN	National Geographic Institute, Guatemala
INETER	Nicaraguan Institute of Territorial Studies
INSIVUMEH	National Institute of Seismology, Vulcanology, Meteorology and Hydrology, Guatemala
IPADE	Institute for the Development and Democracy
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
ITC	International Institute for Geo-Information, Science, and Earth Observation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MAGA	Ministry of Agriculture, Cattle Raising and Food of Guatemala
MARENA	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Nicaragua
MARN	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of El Salvador
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance of Panama
MINSA	Ministry of Health of Nicaragua
MPGR	Permanent Roundtable for Risk Management in El Salvador
MTI	Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure of Nicaragua
OAS	Organization of American States
OEC	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
PAHO	Pan-American Health Organization
PEI	Institucional Strategic Plan - Nicaragua

PNRDN	National Plan for Disaster Response - Nicaragua
PNRR	Risk Reduction National Program - Nicaragua
POSAF	Socio-Environmental & Forests Development Program - Nicaragua
PRIS	Sectoral-Institutional Response Plan - Nicaragua
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SE-CEPREDENAC	Executive Secretariat of the Coordination Center for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America
SEGEPLAN	General Planning Secretariat - Guatemala
SE-SINAPRED	Executive Secretariat of the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response - Nicaragua
SG-SICA	General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System
SICA	Central American Integration System
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIG	Geographic Information System
SINAPRED	National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response - Nicaragua
SINAPROC	National Civil Protection System - Panama
SINIP	National System of Public Investments
SNET	National Service of Territorial Studies of El Salvador
SOPTRAVI	Secretariat of Public Buildings, Transportation and Livelihoods of Honduras
UNAN	Geo-Scientific Research Department - Managua
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAC	San Carlos de Guatemala University
USGS	United States Geological Survey
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

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1. BACKGROUND

The Central American region is one of the regions that has the highest probability of being affected by the occurrence of disasters due to its geographical position, the risk accumulation processes that exist due to its high level of vulnerability and to the increase of threats, whether natural, socio-natural or anthropic.

In October 1998, Hurricane Mitch was responsible for one of the worst disasters in this region, causing great human, social, economic and environmental losses, and increasing the levels of poverty in these countries. The high level of vulnerability of the region with regard to natural phenomena of this magnitude was made evident. Seen from another perspective, large scale disasters are simply the result of hundreds of small disasters that constantly affect the region.

Mitch coincided with the end of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (DIRDN), which promoted a series of fundamental changes in the handling of disaster reduction.

At the regional level, The Coordination Center for Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC) made possible the inclusion of this theme in the XX Summit of Central American Presidents, which included the Dominican Republic and Belize, and was held in October 1999. At this summit the *Declaration of Guatemala II* was prepared, whereby the *Strategic Framework for Vulnerability and Risk Reduction in Central America* was adopted and the *Central American Quinquennium for the Reduction of Vulnerabilities and the Impact of Disasters for the period 2000-2004* was established, CEPREDENAC being entrusted with its regional coordination and development.



Since then, important efforts have been made to improve risk management in Central America in different areas, and some agreements and commitments have been made, which link the vulnerability and disaster reduction theme with environmental issues, climate change, hydrological resources, food security, and production, economy, finance and social matters. Nevertheless, it has been admitted that the efforts to reduce vulnerability and risks have not put a stop to the accumulation processes of these risks and vulnerabilities, neither at the regional nor national level.

With the purpose of analyzing this situation and inasmuch as the year 2003 marked the 5th anniversary of Hurricane Mitch's occurrence, CEPREDENAC together with UNDP promoted the Mitch+5 Regional Forum as an event to reflect on and consider the advances and challenges of each one of the countries with respect to the implementation of four components of the Strategic Framework for Vulnerability and Disaster Reduction in Central America. The Mitch+5 Forum is also connected to the "Institutional Strengthening" component of the Regional Risk Management Program in Central America CEPREDENAC-UNDP.



Guatemala, in April 10th and 11th, 2003. In that occasion, the members of the Board established

This Regional event has been the result of various activities and previous meetings, among which we can start by mentioning CEPREDENAC's Board of Directors Meeting that took place in Rio Dulce,

the execution of the Mitch+5 Regional Forum mandate, by means of the resolution #06-03. Later, on the 30th of May, 2004, the first regional consultation with international organizations and civil society was held in Panama City, aimed to initiate the Forum preparation activities.



In addition to the above mentioned meetings, another CEPREDENAC's Board of Directors reunion was carried out in San Salvador, El Salvador, on the 24th and 25th of July, 2003, and the mandate to begin the Forum's set up process was established, as well as an agreement to designate national coordinators, through resolution #12-03.

The forum was held in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, from December 9 to 11 2003 and was supported by the International Disaster Reduction Strategy (ISDR), the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the EC's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), Japan's Cooperation Agency (JICA), CARE International, the Southern Command, the Office for Foreign Disaster Aid of the Government of the United States (OFDA), the governments of Mexico and Taiwan, the Swedish International Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), among others.

The Forum's main objective was to consolidate or seal the commitment of national governments, the civil society -including private enterprises- and international organizations, to the processes aimed at reducing risks in Central America, in accordance with the Strategic Framework for Vulnerability and Disaster Reduction in Central America. The motto, "Where do we stand and where are we headed" was the basis for the reflection and analysis of the national processes and the regional forum itself. This allowed the socialization of advances, current situation and the main tendencies as to vulnerability, risk and disaster reduction of the principal national, regional and international actors.

A participatory work methodology was designed for the forum, in which national analysis processes acquired great importance and where different governmental and nongovernmental entities, international cooperation organizations and civil society organizations participated.

Likewise, this forum allowed participants to determine the strategic advances, the lessons learned and the tendencies to identify the top priorities for the future. It also allowed a greater interaction and dialogue among actors at various levels, and among different sectors, and all together it contributed to strengthen the coordination and cooperation among the groups involved in disaster reduction processes.

The forum favored the establishment of highly participatory spaces, where different sectors, institutions and disciplines were represented. The 3 workdays were organized around the simultaneous thematic sessions, in which the regional proposals were prepared based on the national reports. In addition, 4 plenary conferences were conducted on important themes, namely Risk and Development, Economic Impact of Disasters, The Process toward Yokohama +10 and the Transformation and Modernization of Central America toward the XXI Century.

The final balance as to the achievements of objectives and results expected for the Regional Forum was considered highly satisfactory, with a number of participants exceeding all expectations. Approximately 320 delegates attended the forum, from governmental institutions, the civil society, cooperation agencies, nongovernmental and international organizations, from all of Central America, and from Colombia, Cuba, Holland, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Sweden, Switzerland and USA.

2. PREPARATION PROCESS FOR THE MITCH+5 REGIONAL FORUM: FROM NATIONAL TO REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS.

The preparation of the regional forum sought to promote two complementary processes: on the one part, the development of national processes consisting in the organization of national forums and the inter-institutional preparation of national reports to be presented at the regional forum, and, on the other part, the organization, coordination and execution of regional event in December. (See the forum's detailed methodology in Annex C)

FORUMS AND NATIONAL REPORTS

The Central American countries concentrated in carrying out national processes to reflect on and analyze the lessons learned, their strong points, advances, limitations and future projections for reducing vulnerabilities and risks, five years after Hurricane Mitch. Thanks to this development phase that ran from April to November 2003, it was possible to:

- Broaden the network of national and international contacts.
- Form institutional national teams, with the participation of the civil society in most of the countries.
- Prepare the Mitch+5 Reports and carry out the national forums.
- Strengthen the region, promoting an updated vision of the advances and goals in the risk reduction area.

In each one of the Central American countries, inter-institutional teams prepared national reports, containing reflections and proposals for the national agenda on risk reduction. These reports were discussed at the national forums organized in each country, which became spaces where priorities for risk reduction converged and were agreed on and where the progress made thus far was evaluated. Governmental, nongovernmental, international and cooperation organizations participated in these forums. (The CD contains the complete version of the national reports and the summary of each report is included as Annex A in this Report).

MITCH +5 REGIONAL FORUM

The forum was held in the city of Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The Permanent Commission for Contingencies (COPECO) hosted the event, which lasted 3 days, from December 9 to 11, 2003. Since the purpose of this forum was to bring together different actors around a regional proposal



The Mitch+5 Regional Forum's Opening. December, 2003

common understanding, the forum combined speeches by representatives from the different countries and representatives from the General Secretariat of SICA, with master classes, simultaneous and plenary thematic sessions, as also an exhibition section with stands, where the principal entities presented publications, reports, maps and other instruments that had been prepared in the region during the last few years.

The main axis of the regional forum was the work in the simultaneous thematic sessions in which the National Reports were presented and where all participants prepared the forum's regional conclusions, recommendations and goals.

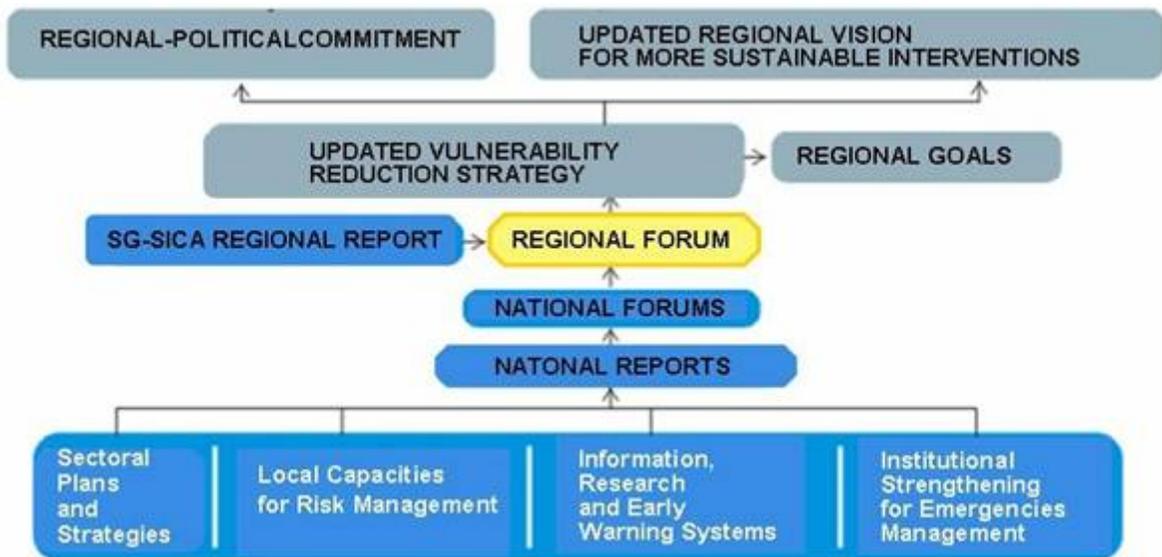
The thematic sessions were structured around the four components of the “Strategic Framework for Vulnerability and Disaster Reduction in Central America”, thus following the same reasoning as that used to structure the national reports.



Mitch+5 Regional Forum Closing Act. December, 2003

The conclusions, recommendations and goals of the simultaneous thematic sessions were presented at the plenary session that took place the third day and they served as a basis to prepare the Tegucigalpa Declaration, which was also approved at the same plenary session.

The following chart reflects the regional forum’s process:



3. LECTURES

Opening address of Presidential Appointee of Honduras Mr. Alberto Díaz Lobo

Tegucigalpa, Honduras, December 9, 2003



- Mr. Alejandro Maldonado, President Protempore of CEPREDENAC
- Mr. Luis Gómez B., National Commissioner of COPECO
- Mr. Gerónimo Giusto, Executive Secretary of CEPREDENAC
- Mrs. Angeles Arenas, Regional Disaster Reduction Advisor for UNDP
- Members of the Board of Directors of CEPREDENAC
- Representatives of the various governments, organizations and institutions of the civilian society of the Central American countries
- Bilateral and multilateral supporters
- Special guests
- Central American brothers

From Honduras I send you my joy and gratitude for your presence here at this event.

The respect we give to nature and the way we interact with it, deserves our halting for a moment to analyze the balance there should be between our disdainful attitude to loosely take advantage of our natural resources, and the so-desired equilibrium to live in harmony with the ecosystems, so in that way have the possibility to face the sudden attacks of nature with a better head start.

The distant optic with which we sometimes view the effects of great happenings excuses us from thinking and acting regarding the caring of natural resources. This mistaken conception makes us pay attention to other priorities as if though nature does not undergo any wearing away. All this wearing away concerns us sooner or later. The melting of glaciers, for example, which occurs yearly when millions of tons of ice that falls into the sea, will affect this region in 10 to 15 years, increasing sea level by more or less one meter. This is in no way insignificant; human settlements, sewage, buildings and the nature of the coastline settlements will have a wave of salt water which they didn't have before. The pollution of the few sources of fresh water in the world, the problems of the ozone layer, the modification of the microclimates and other human mistakes, are present on the scenario of natural disasters.

We are not in the distance; today is part of that future, which, little by little, drags us to more vulnerable situations. The stronger impact of the hurricanes in the region, Mitch seemed to be a steel chain that held us down tightly, and even more so in this country that is today the venue for the reflection of how vulnerable we are and where we are headed in our intent to reduce that vulnerability. The former values of the Central American Union are still current and they become a reality with these natural events; they make us one nation, one people, one common goal, one common destination. What a shame that the price to pay is thousands of lost lives and the clamor from many homes, and the many years of lost labor.

This movement forward, by each country to self-evaluate its advances and mistakes through national forums before this great event, presents us with a great opportunity as a region to be more responsible with the needs that are common to all of us.

We, Honduran people, who will share in this reflection with you, are bringing with us the greatest willingness to learn. At the same time, we would like to help you save on costs, experiences and damages by telling you the story of the vulnerabilities which plague us, as the

tasks of rebuilding a country affected in more than 90% of its territory, with 12 thousand lives lost, more than 50 thousand homes destroyed, 10 years of social and economic regression, and the infrastructure of production and roads damaged in more than 80%. We have progressed, we have rebuilt the country; however, we are not assured that we are less vulnerable.

In my condition as representative of the Government of Honduras, and President of the Board of Directors of COPECO I thank CEPREDENAC for the great idea of this Central American consultation process to evaluate the progress made in regards to the Strategic Framework, which will be favored, without doubt, with the valuable contributions made by us all. I encourage you not to close your eyes in your duty to help the countries establish shortcuts so that Central American politicians, technicians and legal executors, working on the topic we are handling today, will be converted into concrete agreements, that will be the basis for plans and strategic alliances that will provide us with comparative advantages to go onward.

The assessment of the efforts in the consultation process for the National Forum Mitch+5, makes us affirm with propriety, that the civil society, the private sector, the central and local government, and the international cooperation, is the platform of efforts which has re-established us as a country. We are conscious of this assessment, it gives us strong commitments to fortify ourselves as a national system and compact all efforts into one policy and legal framework suitable for risk management.

This opportunity is crucial for COPECO to transform into an institution fortified and belligerent in the struggles to coordinate the country's efforts; efforts that bring together the national actors in a national system of risk management. It is a government commitment to search for the mechanisms, strategies and political postulates that serve as the base for the efficient performance of this system.

It is our duty as Hondurans and Central Americans to place this issue in a high order on the national agendas, since many efforts may render fruitless if not handled with the proper attention: preservation versus destruction of nature without the mandatory measures for the reduction of vulnerabilities, have not left us any positive balances, and this is a transversal axis for territorial planning. It is our commitment as a government to fight for that place in the State policies.

We continue being vulnerable, and we do need each other, so that the Central America that shelters us today, conserve its potential and beauty, so that we may live with less fears of nature's outbursts; let us accept the challenge to hold together in a regional posture that benefits us all, let us take advantage of this opportunity.

Thank you for being here and for making us feel that we are not alone in this difficult struggle to be in peace with nature!

Welcome!



**Excerpts from the presentation of the
Regional Forum for Risk Management in
Central America**
**Mrs. Vida Luz Meneses, Representative of
FRGR (as for Spanish acronym)**
Tegucigalpa, Honduras, December 10, 2003

Central America is globally recognized as one of the most dangerous zones in the world for the convergence of severe natural threats as: earthquakes, volcanic activity, draughts and hurricanes. Throughout history there is clear evidence of the impact of these events, in the pre-Columbian civilizations as well as those emerging after the Conquest.

In this context, the Central American Presidents subscribed, in 1999, the "Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Vulnerabilities and Disasters in Central America," with the aim of adopting measures tending to reduce disaster risk, without really creating a link with public policies related to development. Hence, the results have been ambiguous in all the countries of the region, especially because many of the actions taken in the business sector and the state "modernization", for example, end up creating greater economic and institutional vulnerabilities at the same time they reduce even more the profitability of the farming sector and the capacities of the state to manage cattle and industrial development.

From the abovementioned comes up the need for an alternative reading to that situation, which should be adopted by the Central American governments, essentially oriented to the assessment of the level of accomplishment of the achievements for each one of the components of the Strategic Framework.

While presenting this topic, there are three things we must point out: 1) it is necessary to recognize our political vulnerability, 2) as well as to assume that our societies are going through an education process, toward agreement, 3) and that we should work according to the different beats of the national processes.

The Regional Forum for Risk Management in Central America is a network made up of more than 47 organizations of the civil society in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, from different source and nature, amalgamated in national networks as:

- Association of NGO's of Honduras (ASONOG)
- Civil Convergence for Risk Management of Guatemala (COCIGER)
- Round Table for Risk Management in Nicaragua
- Permanent Round Table for Risk Management in El Salvador (MPGR)

Risks reduction has to face two challenges, that can be overcome, because as the interventions vary from those explicitly oriented towards emergency preparedness, to those that have adopted a more integral focus with economic, social, physical and/or environmental actions, it is still clear that the majority of the interventions are not facing backdrop problems that contribute to the increase and accumulation of risks.

To obtain effective interventions the following axis are proposed:

- Monitoring of government actions and of the progress of the development processes.
- Take part in the governments' reduction and support initiatives for risk management.
- Commitment to adequately use financial resources.

For cooperation agencies and financial organizations, it is recommended to go beyond the vision of the project and assume a wider vision of the process. Also, strengthen south to south cooperation between national organizations, and assume as a commitment the development of the majority.

On the other hand, a series of actions should be initiated for the creation and maintenance of local capacities as:

- Lessening intermediaries to increase the impact on the localities.
- Give privilege to the intervention of national and local organizations.
- Channel cooperation in a decentralized way.
- Give privilege to cooperation with organizations of the civil society.
- Respect the local autonomy and the development programs.

In conclusion, Central America is at a crucial point for its future development, in which it is required that new views are adopted, create new institutional gears and new practices between the civil society and the government, which allow focusing prospective intervention actions toward risk, from a more informed perspective, appropriate and favorable for the improvement of living conditions of the poorer and vulnerable populations. (For more information: search for Additional Documents in the CD, Report on the Central American region, five years after Mitch).



**Closing address
Given by Elizabeth Fong, Resident Representative of
UNDP Panama**

Tegucigalpa, Honduras, December 11, 2003

Lessons learned from natural disasters are opportunities for transformation.

These words capture the spirit of this Regional Forum in which you have evaluated the progress and difficulties experienced by many countries of the great Central American family, at the end of the first Quinquenium after Hurricane Mitch.

Paradoxically, a tragedy of the dimensions of Mitch not only stirred up fraternal solidarity of peoples, governments and cooperation agencies, but also became the window for opportunities which gave way to much regional debate on the issues of vulnerability, environment, risks, disasters and development models, as it had never occurred before in Central America.

The principal social actors as the governments, the various organizations of the civil society, the private sector, along with the regional and international cooperation agencies succeeded in recognizing that humanitarian response to disasters is not enough, and that therefore, the disaster risk reduction demands a position of priority in the making of policies, having as a frame a vision of development which incorporates the risk analysis component within the national plans and investment programs.

Progress made in the development of the Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Vulnerabilities and Disasters in Central America, approved at the Presidential Summit held in Guatemala in 1999 which have been reviewed during the sessions of this Forum, constitute the first steps of significant progress towards the local level risk management, early warning systems, research on threats, sectoral plans for the reduction of vulnerabilities and the support of national capacities to improve and strengthen the systems for disaster response and prevention, within the framework of an integrated planning, based on sustainable development.

This Strategic Framework has served as a platform which has generated synergies between UNDP and Central American Integration System, through CEPREDENAC. The Regional Risk Management Program in Central America, carried out by CEPREDENAC, with the support of UNDP, has generated important data for the regional debate such as the document called "Local Level Risk Management, Concept and Practice", which is a product derived from the systematization of experiences on this matter and the discussion at national round tables carried out in each country; as well as a pilot experience that includes the risk factor into the programming procedures of public investments in around 53 institutions, and the inclusion of the risk factor in the Regulations and Procedures Manual of the National System of Public Investments (SINIP) of Panama.

The expressions of solidarity during the Mitch tragedy that brought together in brotherhood all of Central America, gave way to reflexive processes as to what to do and how to do it. It is undeniable, as it is reflected in the countries' reports, that a growing sensitization with respect to the topics with which we are related to in this thematic has been achieved, but yet there is a long way to go. To illustrate the magnitude of the problem that lies ahead, it's just necessary to point out the studies done by the United Nations which show that if the current

process is not reversed by the year 2050, losses from disasters will reach three hundred thousand million dollars (\$300,000,000) per year and the loss of approximately one hundred thousand (100,000) human lives.

In the light of these projections, we cannot remain unconcerned and we have got to contribute to reverse this global tendency in the Central American panorama, which is our responsibility. The institutionalization of risk management in national policies is manifest and necessary, and for that it will be mandatory to insist on the strengthening of the legal framework that will support it, pointed toward the establishment of the thematic as a visible topic on the national budgets, which sustain the policies, plans and projects.

Another key element, singled out in the Declaration approved by this Forum, is the recognition that risk management must be in line with decentralization processes, since the conditions of major risk occur among more vulnerable communities, poorer and lacking of services. Nonetheless, it is equally important to adopt preventive approaches based on the planning and use of land, as well as assigning responsibilities to those who generate risks. Let us remember that while it is true that the poorer population groups present a higher level of vulnerability, it is turning out to be more frequent to find situations that place other population groups in a risky condition.

The public and private investments are varied and they are depleted in a short time before an ordinary manifestation of nature, caused by problems of design or construction; in short, for not having identified the conditions of the environment. We cannot continue blaming nature for those disasters provoked by human behavior. We have come to the time when these actions cannot continue to go unpunished.

We, leaders and citizens, have to face these challenges and assume shared responsibility to avoid a greater deterioration of the sub-region in the future. Short-term thinking and blinding ourselves to the fact of growing vulnerabilities; making public and private investments without previous analysis of risks; centralizing participation and decision-making, are actions that must be overcome if we really want to guarantee a sustainable future for Central America.

The results of the evaluation done at this Forum constitute the base line to measure the actions that need to be enacted in the next five years. The experience gained also teaches us that, to expand the support base for risk management it is necessary to show results in measurable and provable terms. For that, a vital element to count on is specialized information on the subject matter, which will complement and strengthen the national indicators systems for development.

In this way, the citizens and politicians can value in its fairest dimension how Central American Societies and their governments are responding to the challenges resulting from Mitch. A good system of indicators on risk management and related topics, provide a valuable tool to the civil society, for it to comply with one of its most important roles: the monitoring of great national problems by the citizens.

It is important to maintain a holistic view of the Central American situation. The economies of our countries have not attained the expected level of growth, and therefore, it is necessary that the countries alone as well as international cooperation agencies work together in an effort to optimize the resources we have at hand.

We must always have foremost in our minds that risk management is not a topic exclusive for specialists, because all development activities can generate risks or reduce them.

That is, the approach should be inclusive and encourage more participation of all the social actors.

As of this Forum, the perspective for the new lustrum opens which will require updating the strategy and support of all the governments in the region. In this updating of the strategy it will be fundamental to incorporate the Millennium Development Goals with the aim of strengthening a social bond which harmonizes, in an integral manner, the resources and efforts of the politicians of Central America on the matter of risk, which in turn contribute to employ the synergies in the struggle for a reduction in half of extreme poverty for the year 2015.

UNDP recognizes the importance of CEPREDENAC as a regional coordination body in the context of disaster reduction, and for that we consider it is important to continue supporting the efforts they do towards the building of safer societies.

I'd like to thank you for the kind invitation to take part in this Closing Ceremony of the Forum, and congratulate all the participants for a job well done, and particularly CEPREDENAC for having made this regional event possible. We are convinced that the recommendations deriving from this Regional Forum will constitute strategic elements to conduct countries towards achieving sustainable development in Central America.

Closing remarks
By Gerónimo Giusto Robelo, Executive Secretary of CEPREDENAC

Tegucigalpa, Honduras, December 11, 2003.



Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is for me a matter of pride and satisfaction to address you on behalf of the Board of Directors and the Executive Secretariat of CEPREDENAC at the closing of the most important event held in the Central American region in the last years regarding the thematic of vulnerability reduction facing disasters.

I must highlight the response given by each member country of CEPREDENAC to the call made by its Board of Directors to develop a process of analysis which, 5 years after the tragedy caused by Hurricane Mitch, allowed us to visualize: where we are and where we want to go.

It is equally indispensable to highlight the positive effort made in the countries so that in this process not only the government actors would participate, but also the representatives from the different sectors of society, government cooperation agencies, and international and regional organizations, in a joint effort for bringing wills together to make common statements looking for a better future for the people of the region.

With great satisfaction we have come to know through the national reports, the countless realizations of the countries during this last period. Today, it is unbeatable the state of mind of the governments and the citizens in general as regards the need to prioritize the attention to risks generation causes, without diminishing our capacity for emergency response.

All the countries have made great progress in the understanding, analysis, mapping, monitoring and warning mechanisms on its main threats. Nonetheless, we have to admit that we are still far from having an evaluation of the threats and risks at the local scale for the entire territory.

Great parts of the efforts and also of the achievements are referred to training, organization, analysis and monitoring of risks, as well as to the mitigating activities in countless municipalities and communities.

It is not a matter of hiding the fact that the road ahead is long in order that it won't only be a few, but all the municipalities of the Isthmus, those that are committed to this mission.

The activities developed in the areas as education, health, environment, nutrition and feeding safety, agriculture, housing and human settlements, transportation and public services, to mention a few, are countless; it is already difficult, due to time availability, to mention them one by one, or try to establish which of these activities are the most important ones.

Several countries already have policies, strategies, national plans and programs, for the reduction of vulnerabilities and some have incorporated risk management in the environmental, social or poverty reduction plans.

In like manner, it must be highlighted that the majority of the sectoral agencies of the Central American Integration System are including vulnerability and risk reduction in their regional plans and programs.

However, it won't be before a few years before risk reduction management becomes an integral and fundamental part of the policies, strategies, plans and development programs at the regional, national and local level, as well as of the planning and use of the territory in every single Central American country.

In this Forum we have heard from each one of the countries, how they have highlighted the efforts and advances attained concerning institutional strengthening, and national, local and community preparedness for crisis situations. Even some countries manifested, with great satisfaction, the establishment of modern centers for emergency operations. However, in general, the region is far from having sufficient capacity to respond diligently, effectively and autonomously, to great disasters, like the events that can again affect our countries.

The overall balance, without doubt, is positive. But it is necessary to understand and accept that the risks are not simple problems, neither are simple to solve; to understand and accept that risks are expressions of deep and complex problems on development; understand and accept that poverty, environmental degradation and disordered urban growth are internationally recognized as the main causes of the risks that are affecting our territories; understand and accept that these causes are still present and tend to grow in the entire continent. So, we cannot wait for simple and short-term solutions.

Consequently, a future vision, a long-term vision, an intense and sustained effort on the part of the local and national governments, the business sector, social organizations and of each citizen, is required to take the reduction of risks to the deepest roots of the institutional and civilian culture, so that in all public and private activities on development, due priority will be given to the reduction of physical, social, political, economical and environmental vulnerabilities in all our region.

Additionally, a great conviction and disposition is required towards the objective of strengthening the Central American integration, in this, as in all other matters, if we really seek to a better future for our people.

The proposals and recommendations emanating from this Forum will guide the strategic actions of CEPREDENAC in the immediate and distant future.

We are of the best disposition to assume the commitment to put into practice the recommendations deriving from this Forum, and in particular, that of updating the Strategic Framework. However, this important task cannot rest exclusively in the hands of CEPREDENAC; it demands the commitment and participation of all those who were a part of the national forums and in this important event.

I would like to make special recognition to all the international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, and cooperation, who with their human, technical and financial support, have accompanied the Central American countries during this intense process.

I also want to show special gratitude to the people and the government of Honduras and the Committee of the Permanent Commission of Contingencies, for their invaluable and generous hospitality, without which it wouldn't have been possible to carry out the objectives proposed for this Forum.

To all of the members of the organization, logistic, administrative and support teams, an applause in recognition of your excellent work.

God bless you. Thank you.

4. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOALS OF THE FORUM

The conclusions, recommendations and goals of the forum were consolidated at the simultaneous thematic sessions and were presented at the plenary session on December 11th through the Rapporteur's Reports and the correspondent summary of the conclusions, recommendations and goals of the forum (See Annex B: rapporteur's reports). Please find below a synthesis of the above mentioned reports.

COMPONENT A: Sectoral Plans and Strategies

It was agreed that it's necessary to revert the growing process of risk accumulation in the region. While it was acknowledged that there are proposals to incorporate the risk factor as a transversal axis of sectoral development plans and strategies, their application is not evident at the country and regional levels.

The recommendations are aimed at obtaining that the development plans of each country include the risk management approach in different sectors (production, social or services sectors), in an institutionalized manner and clearly ranked in the priorities' scale. Likewise, it is recommended to strengthen the influence capacity of the regional bodies dealing with this theme, by updating the corresponding regional orders and mandates.



Specific goals have been established so that the risk management approach may be included in the development programs of each country and in their regional political agendas. Also, another proposed goal is yet the establishment and reinforcement of the national risk management systems.

COMPONENT B: Institutional Strengthening for the Management of Emergencies



In the conclusions we can see that there is some progress in the capacity to manage disasters, which could be improved by increasing the inclusion of preparedness mechanisms for response as a permanent process of risk management.

Strengthening national institutions for disaster management from a broad risk management approach, integrating the regional, national, local and community strata.

The principal goal in this component is the incorporation of disaster management as an integral part of risk management into political discussion forums, as a permanent mechanism for the region's sustainable development.

COMPONENT C: Strengthening Local Capacities for Risk Management

It was agreed that clear advances have been made at institutions or systems that have played a coordination role in the prevention, mitigation and response activities. These entities or bodies have been strengthened and empowered within a legal framework in a greater or lesser degree. However, they are still incipient and in progress process, with an integral and global risk management vision.

The incorporation of risk management in the formulation of development policies and the national agenda is also recommended (indicating that sustainable actions must be projected, and tending to promote a risk management culture), as also the inclusion of this thematic in Municipal Development Plans with budget lines to ensure proper follow-up.



A relevant goal in this component is the inclusion of risk management in the formulation of development policies and the national agenda, as well as the fact that the processes and institutions that follow this direction should count on a Legal Framework that is sufficient and clear, so that institutionality and the processes can be consolidated.

COMPONENT D: Information, Research and Early Warning Systems



The conclusions show an important progress in this sector with regard to methodologies, research policies, institutional strengthening and the establishment of early warning systems. The participants have admitted, however, that knowledge is a necessary element for risk reduction in the region and that the progress made thus far does not guarantee the availability of information to meet the national demand, nor is it sufficient to support decision making that entail the transformation of the territory or the use of land.

It has been recommended that to improve efficiency levels in this sector the information has to be considered as a service and that we go forward in the issuance of protocols, procedures and the establishment of permanent channels that can guarantee pertinence, reliability, production sustainability and use of information by decision makers.

It was proposed to have a regional political strategy for information, research and early warning systems related to risk management and disaster reduction, as well as a policy on minimum standards for free-access information; to strengthen capacities in the use of digital technologies for diffusing and processing information, and for training, as also to allocate resources that can guarantee their sustainability. It was also recommended to have governing bodies that can guarantee the proper coordination of information, research and early warning system policies, in order to manage risks in the countries of the region.

5. DECLARATION OF THE FORUM

The Declaration is the final document issued in the Forum and it is of great importance. It has been drafted with the purpose of encouraging a greater commitment of governments with regard to the risk reduction theme. Its preparation was entrusted to a work team made up of the representatives of each country, international organizations and NGOs. The conclusions, recommendations and goals of the thematic sessions of the forum were the basis for the Tegucigalpa Declaration.

MITCH +5 REGIONAL FORUM *Where do we stand and where are we headed?* **Tegucigalpa, Honduras, December 9 – 11, 2003.**

TEGUCIGALPA DECLARATION



Luis Gómez, Reading "The Tegucigalpa Declaration"

The Representatives of the member states comprising the Coordination Center for Natural Disaster Prevention – CEPREDENAC (per the acronym in Spanish), regional organizations, governmental cooperation agencies, civil and international organizations that participated in the Mitch +5 Regional Forum held in Tegucigalpa, Honduras on December 9, 10 and 11, 2003,

WHEREAS

The CEPREDENAC's Board of Directors decided to promote a reflection on the achievements and challenges of each one of the countries with respect to the Strategic Framework for Vulnerability and Disaster Impact Reduction in Central America and, therefore, commemorate the five years of Mitch's occurrence by conducting the Mitch +5 Regional Forum. For this, analysis processes were initiated at a national level, with representatives of different Governmental institutions, government cooperation agencies, the civil society and international organizations.

Five years ago, Hurricane Mitch struck the Central American region, which evidenced the high vulnerability of any preexisting order in the region, causing great human, social, economic and environmental loss and increasing poverty in Central American countries.

In 1999, the governments of the Dominican Republic and Belize subscribed the Declaration of Guatemala II, whereby the Strategic Framework for Vulnerability and Disasters Reduction in Central America was adopted and the Five-Year Period in Central America for Reducing Vulnerability and the Impact of Disasters for the 2000-2004 term was established.

In 2001, through the Central American Integration System – SICA, the countries of the region submitted to the international community a strategy for the Transformation and Modernization of Central America in the XXI century, which includes the reduction of vulnerabilities as a central point of the region's development.

Within the context of the President's Summit held in Belize on September 3, 2003 was subscribed CEPREDENAC's New Organizational Agreement with the purpose of including in its objectives the strategic vision agreed to by the Central American Presidents in the Declaration of Guatemala II and having a more effective influence on the incorporation of risk management and the reduction of vulnerabilities in the region's development policies.

During the last five years, the Central American region has participated and is participating in various processes that entail the signing of new agreements and commitments linked to the theme of vulnerabilities and disasters reduction in connection with the environmental, climate change and hydric resources, food security, production, economic, financial and social fields.

Worldwide, the accumulation of risks has brought about an increase in the frequency and gravity of disasters and it is estimated that this tendency will continue in the future if no corrective policies and strategies are adopted. It is to this end and to review the Yokohama Strategy and Action Plan that the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction will be held in Kobe, Japan from January 18 to 22, 2005.

THEREFORE

1. **Acknowledge** that greater awareness has been created in the region on the need to reduce the existing risk levels, which has led the countries of the region to make efforts to reduce vulnerabilities, within the Strategic Framework adopted in the Declaration of Guatemala II, and to invest numerous human, technical and financial resources in recovery and reconstruction activities after Mitch, with a view to transforming and modernizing Central America.
2. **Acknowledge** the progress made, especially as regards policies, programs and projects directed at understanding and monitoring risks, increasing capacities for local level risk management, handling emergencies and developing sectoral strategies and plans for vulnerability reduction. However, some weaknesses and obstacles in the implementation of the Strategic Framework persist.
3. **Acknowledge** that, notwithstanding the foregoing, and linked to the region's development processes, high levels of vulnerability remain, caused chiefly by the high levels of poverty, social disintegration and insecurity, the inadequate handling of natural resources and environmental degradation and the disorderly growth of human settlements.
4. **Consider** necessary, in strengthening democratic institutions, to increase efforts to adopt the policies, strategies and mechanisms necessary in order for the inclusion of risk analysis and management to be truly indispensable requirements in the planning of all public and private activities in Central America's local, national and regional development.
5. **Consider** essential, in accordance with the foregoing, for National Investment Systems and International Financing Institutions to require risk analysis for all the projects submitted to their consideration and for investments in management activities for risk reduction to have a coherent priority with regard to the high vulnerability levels that exist.
6. **Consider** necessary to increase efforts to strengthen the institutions responsible for the prevention, mitigation and response of disasters from a systemic, integral, cross-sectoral and participatory approach, by reviewing and modernizing the legal framework and ensuring the human, technical and financial resources necessary for its smooth functioning.
7. **Consider** important to strengthen the mechanisms for the rendering of accounts and control of the activities carried out by the different actors in the risk management field in order to guarantee the transparency and proper use of the resources, and to define, at the same time, the liability of those who generate risks.

8. **Deem** necessary to adopt adequate measures in order to increase the participation of civil society organizations in the integral risk management and, particularly, to strengthen social control over these activities.
9. **Recommend** stimulating land planning and utilization processes that have a preventive approach, as a fundamental tool to prevent the generation of new risks and reduce the existing ones, and to increase local decentralization, ensuring the transfer of powers and resources for the integral risk management.
10. **Recommend** that all the National Governments update, formulate and adopt State policies and strategic plans during 2004, based on the national analysis presented and the conclusions and recommendations issued at the Mitch +5 Regional Forum.
11. **Consider** necessary to update the Strategic Framework for Vulnerability and Disasters Reduction in Central America, in light of the conclusions, recommendations and goals established at the Mitch +5 Regional Forum, and to promote its official adoption for the Central American President's Summit. The necessary updating process must be coordinated by CEPREDENAC, according to its aims and objectives.
12. **Request** that the commitment and support of Central American countries and regional organizations, governmental cooperation agencies, civil society organizations and international organizations with regard to CEPREDENAC be strengthened, with the purpose of maximizing and optimizing the integration and development of national capacities for vulnerability and disaster reduction in Central America.
13. **Acknowledge** the invaluable cooperation that the Region has received during this period by bilateral and multilateral cooperation, regional organizations, governmental cooperation agencies, civil society organizations and international organizations, and call on them to continue and increase their efforts in the different development areas.
14. **Request** the governments of the region to take into consideration the contributions of the Mitch +5 Regional Forum in the preparation process and the deliberations that will take place at the Second World Conference for Disaster Reduction to be held in Kobe, Japan, in January 2005, in order to present, as one body, the Central American viewpoint on integral risk management.
15. **Undertake** to organize a new Regional Forum in the year 2008, on such date and in such place as may be determined by the country members of CEPREDENAC, in conjunction with governmental cooperation agencies, civil society organizations and international organizations.
16. **Thank** the People and the Government of Honduras and, in particular, the Permanent Commission for Contingencies – COPECO, for its technical and logistical support and for their generous hospitality, which elements contributed to the success of this Regional Forum.

Annexes



Annex A-1: Executive Summary of the National Report

COSTA RICA

I. INTRODUCTION

The Costa Rica Mitch +5 National Forum was held on October 1ST, 2003, in San José, with the participation of 50 representatives called by the National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Response (CNE), with the financial support of UNDP. The purpose of this event was to assess the completion of the Strategic Framework for Vulnerability and Disasters Reduction in Central America (S.F), pursuant to some of the methodological proposals that the organizers of the Mitch+5 Forum issued for the event.

The discussions were conducted on worktables, one for each one of the four components of the Strategic Framework for Vulnerability and Disasters Reduction in Central America, followed by a synthesis, validation and subsequent drafting process carried out by a smaller group.

II. THE REPORT

II.1. IMPACT OF THE HURRICANE

The hurricane brought heavy rains that fell during eleven days, mainly affecting the Pacific Seaboard, the Northern Zone and the Central Valley. It caused floods and landslides in 39 cantons located in 16 watersheds. The impact varied across cantons. Statistics show 10 people killed, 10 wounded and 4 missing 99 shelters were set up, where 5411 persons were attended to, while others turned to relatives and friends for shelter. This reduced human impact can be attributed to the country's preparedness and response efforts, and to the support of the media, the actions of response institutions, and the work of local organizations, in particular, the successful evacuations and rescue missions carried out by the emergency committees.

In monetary terms, the damage was calculated at 92 million Dollars, 55 of which were direct and corresponded to 1% of the GNP. The agricultural sector was the most affected one (69%), followed by transportation infrastructure (27%). This situation forced the government to declare a National Emergency State and to invest an amount upward of 8 million Dollars out of its own funds, which allowed at least the rehabilitation of the main infrastructure. Foreign aid, on the other hand, was very limited because it was addressed to other more affected countries.

II.2. NATIONAL INITIATIVES

The national initiatives did not use the Strategic Framework as reference so that they were not used consciously and coherently in the regional policy regarding this issue. In fact, they constituted short-term national responses to the problem. Yet, Mitch can be defined as a milestone that brought the political conditions to boost the initiatives that were being prepared before the event.

II.2.1. SECTORAL STRATEGIES AND PLANS

The inclusion of sectors in this issue is particular, even as regards internal conduction and organization mechanisms. The risk management theme is still not part of a coherent and systematic policy including the participation of all the parties.

The role and legitimacy of the CNE as the entity responsible for coordinating inter-institutional and inter-sectoral efforts is acknowledged. Its work as head of the National System for the Risk Prevention and Emergencies Management is also acknowledged.

The lack of financial and human resources is the principal weakness, and the limitations of the legal framework constitute the main challenge and obstacle. Added to the foregoing is the need to improve and strengthen political motivation and awareness, include the theme in national planning and acquire technology.

Disaster is no longer viewed by stages, but as a problem that must be tackled within the context of a public policy blended into the country's development process.

II.2.2. LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR RISK MANAGEMENT

The emergency committees constitute the main effort in the promotion of local management, even if in the past these committees have concentrated more on handling disasters than preventing them. This effort is part of a higher policy, the strengthening of institutional capacities, which allows authorities to reduce to the most basic organizational levels, guidelines for public policy in this regard.

The absence of coordination and of institutional and sectoral legitimacy for the central authority in the operation of the emergency committees is evident, so much that organizational problems at the central level are given more importance than the local ones. The representatives of the Forum indicated the need to correct such deficiency, and gave the CNE the task of exerting its influence in the making of decisions of institutions in order to create awareness.

A change towards the decentralization of the programs, authority and resources is proposed. It has also been determined that community representatives need to be integrated, participate and be organized in committees and specific projects, such as early warning projects.

It has been mentioned that it is necessary to have municipal authorities participate, not just in the organization of committees, but also in regulating local development.

Budget weaknesses, the lack of resources, information and technology are evident, as well as lack of references to successful experiences regarding the execution of specific projects that have been conducted with the help of international cooperation.

II.2.3. INFORMATION, RESEARCH AND EARLY WARNING

The concepts of the component have many meanings that are not clear and cannot be homologated. Early warning, in particular, is used to justify many actions.

It is necessary for information to function under widely diffused decentralized integrated systems in order to support planning, with a preventive approach.

As to research, the bulk is oriented toward threat aspects, which is why research on vulnerability aspects must be promoted.

As a result of Mitch, more support has been given to hydro-meteorological and watershed surveillance themes. It is important to go beyond this point, applying the warning concept to other aspects of reality, such as geological and technological aspects, and to do this according to a multi-threat approach.

In terms of knowledge, databases, professional preparedness, and the capacity to use technology, among others, the country has progressed, but the lack of resources does not allow much progress, follow-up on analyses, patterns, diffusion or the development of projects going beyond the national context.

There is a demand for a greater participation of international cooperation and for support in the region that respects and enhances national particularities, without seeking homologation.

II.2.4. INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING FOR EMERGENCIES MANAGEMENT

If we take into consideration the progress that the country had made before the passing of Mitch, it is necessary to strengthen inter-institutional coordination mechanisms through a modification of laws, regulations, plans and procedures. Likewise, it is also necessary to issue guidelines and make regulatory changes in order to guarantee the participation of institutional representatives in coordination groups created by the CNE, such as the regional and local emergency committees.

As to access to resources, particularly to the ordinary budgets of institutions, this is the primary aspect that must be solved. This is especially important for the handling of emergencies declared through Executive Decree.

It has been recognized that the country has made more progress in the handling of emergencies than in prevention.

III. CRITERIA FOR AN INTEGRAL DISASTER REDUCTION POLICY

CEPREDENAC must promote a new strategy for the region that can meet its expectations, needs and proposals, and it should be issued in response to national and regional requirements to see the government, not cooperation agencies, assume the great responsibilities that exist and that lie ahead.

III.1. A POLICY WITH A VIEW TO DEVELOPMENT

The programs, projects and activities conducted by institutions are not limited to disasters, prevention and management, but are based on policies of a much broader scope and priority and on national policies that revolve around development priorities, such as environmental problems and the social welfare of the needy.

In this regard, we must change the helpers' approach that we have adopted in disasters management, basing ourselves on risk reduction as a transversal axis in public policies. This means that we must take a political stand, an ideology, about the kind of development that we wish and that we promote. The theme must be included in the development strategy of each country, especially the management of elements that cause disasters.

III.2. FROM THE DISASTER STAGES TO THE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

There is a change in the traditional approach for handling disasters. The approach by stages, i.e. “before, during and after”, is being left aside and we have moved on to an approach based on the policies introduced in the national planning process. The reduction of disasters, apart from being a policy in itself, is also a reference for determining other policies.

III.3. OVERCOMING MITCH

It is necessary to overcome the Mitch trauma and to concentrate on the explanation of the causes of other phenomena, apart from the hydro meteorological ones that affect the region, such as those related to geology and technology. It has been stated and proposed that we must work according to the multi-threat concept and go toward the understanding of what vulnerabilities are made of.

III.4. RESOURCES

Insufficient resources are the main weakness and access thereto the main challenge. In this regard, the role of international cooperation is vital. A policy in this direction should allow some level of budgetary autonomy for the programs incorporating, for example, priority matters into institutional structures, such as permanent programs. Likewise, there should be an agenda of regional priorities that eliminates the conditions proposed by international cooperation. This agenda should take into account and respect the differences in terms of progress and organization, as well as the needs and different proposals of each country. CEPREDENAC must operate as a mediator with cooperators, but it must defend the differences that exist in each one of the countries.

III.5. THE ROLE AND IMAGE OF CEPREDENAC: A PENDING TASK

CEPREDENAC requires an identity beyond that of a mediation entity. It must be an entity that generates development policies. It must be a representative entity that generates policy proposals applicable to the countries.

The regional strategy must adopt and implement the requirements of the International Strategy for Disasters Reduction in key aspects such as:

- **Orientation for the poorest inhabitants**
- **Use of financial contribution for creating and transferring information and technology**
- **Development and knowledge dissemination**
- **Promotion of institutional strengthening**
- **Support to local level management initiatives**
- **Specific early warning projects**

This effort to harmonize the regional strategy and the international strategy approved by the UN is vital for the survival of CEPREDENAC as an integral, representation and regional mediation entity.

Annex A-2: Executive Summary of the National Report

EL SALVADOR

I. SECTORIAL STRATEGIES

I.1. WHERE DO WE STAND

The theme of vulnerability reduction has become relevant in the country since great efforts have been made toward the definition and application of strategies in connection with health, food security and agricultural development for handling threats. Nevertheless, these efforts have been more oriented toward management, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities than toward prevention and preparedness in order to reduce the impact of disasters. Likewise, important progress has been made with regard to legal and institutional policies and the execution of projects, which have incorporated elements relating to risk and disaster management, especially those relating to the natural threats management.

Furthermore, the educational sector that has been strongly affected by natural phenomena has made important efforts to reduce vulnerability in this sector. As yet, there is no Educational Plan to develop a risk prevention and management culture. Likewise, there is a lack of updated and available information that can facilitate the issuance and execution of unified policies and strategies to attend to children psychosocially.

In spite of the important progress made with regard to institutions, physical works and actions to reduce risk, there is insufficient financial support from the Government to effectively reduce the risk factor in the country.

In the last years, El Salvador has benefited from significant advances in the formulation of policies to stimulate environmental protection and conservation, however, these policies are scattered and poorly diffused. Likewise, the current legal framework does not explicitly state or introduce risk as a fundamental element in reduction by means of Environmental Impact Studies.

After Mitch and the earthquakes of 2001, El Salvador went through a learning and diffusion process of the risk management concept through the efforts made by NGOs, international cooperation and various governmental institutions. Yet, there still does not exist either a risk management policy that allows and reflects a standard view of the subject, nor basic guidelines for its promotion.

I.2. WHERE ARE WE HEADAD

Presently, there already exist various State policies (Desertification and drought, environment, agriculture, etc.) which define the aspects emphasized by the institutions. In this regard, these policies must be identified and taken into consideration for new proposals. Furthermore, there should be a debate on the existing legal framework and the reform proposals on Environmental issues as well as civil defense issues. In that same line of thought, it is necessary to design a Risk Management Policy reflecting a standard or unified view of the theme, based on a broad consensus reached in conjunction with Salvadorian governmental organizations and institutions.

It must be stressed that the inclusion of criteria for the assessment of the impact of risk in environmental impact evaluations that the MARN requires for new projects would be a significant step forward in the risk management area. Likewise, laws stimulating reforestation, the protection of watersheds and hillsides as well as the adequate use of solid waste would be useful.

In this same context, the incorporation into the national risk and disaster management policy of a government commitment to allocate its own funds for financing institutions and initiatives would be clear evidence of the fact that the country is acknowledging the importance of the subject.

Upon the occurrence of natural phenomena, another challenge for the nation is to encourage the participation of the private sector in order to facilitate other financial protection mechanisms.

Finally, it is necessary to design an Educational Policy to develop a risk prevention and management culture.

II. STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR RISK MANAGEMENT

II.1. WHERE DO WE STAND

In the last five years, we can say that there has been some progress made at the local level as regards risk management. For at least part of the civil society this is an important matter and one to be followed up daily. In this context, important actions to improve inter-institutional coordination have been undertaken and promoted, with the purpose of contributing to the local level risk reduction, but deficient institutional interrelations remain (coordination and knowledge) which need to be overcome, especially if we take into consideration that we are still exposed to natural threats and not better prepared socially to face up to them with an improved recovery capacity than five years ago.

Five years after Mitch, vulnerability at the local level has been reduced thanks to an understanding of the threats and the environment. Nevertheless, it is still necessary to carry out projects that develop actions for the strengthening of local capacities through education and technical assistance.

There has been some progress made on this matter and there exist a larger and increasing appropriation process by many organized community sectors. There is also more involvement and participation of the communities, the NGOs and local institutions in monitoring and threat warning activities.

Efforts to develop the decentralization process in order to render risk reduction effective have been important, however, toward the need to reduce the probability of sustaining damages and loss render, these efforts are still insufficient. Local institutional capacities must be urgently reinforced so as to aid in the application of norms and regulations.

As part of the mechanisms that help in reducing risks, a systematization and support process has been initiated, this will allow people to learn from local and national lessons and successful experiences.

The sustainability of risk management processes in municipalities is one of the biggest challenges. Municipal projects for the prevention and mitigation of risks must be properly supported and funded.

II.2. WHERE ARE WE HEADED

It is important to continue and to improve actions aimed at strengthening the local capacities of farmers and the rural population in order to be able to face disasters. Thus, it is necessary to keep creating the organizational, logistic and technical basis in local and municipal development committees and in the principal watersheds of the country. To this end, we need to insist on the establishment of territorial development plans that can allow a development that is orderly and consistent with the sustainability of natural resources.

Regulations and guidelines for Local Level Risk Management and Early Warning Systems are required and they need to be standard throughout the country. The recent creation of the National Service of Territorial Studies (SNET) is a valuable contribution to the institutionalization of risk management in El Salvador. The resources needed for its future development and consolidation must be analyzed. Likewise, the inter-institutional integration of programs and interventions at the local level will need to be encouraged in order to support the durable local development of municipalities.

Containment mechanisms to develop projects for vulnerability reduction and subsequently local level risk management could be addressed. The containment of projects for the mitigation of risks where different key local actors participate (NGOs, private companies, municipalities, central governmental entities and community organizations) is the key to risk reduction.

It is necessary to install an insurance culture on the population at large. It is recommended to systematize national or international experiences aimed at building capacities for this and other themes, such as insurance management, the creation of different products applied to the needs of the country's different sectors and actors.

It is also necessary to continue to educate at smaller levels and to organize at different levels, whether locally or at micro watersheds and micro regions, and to propose development alternatives that benefit these synergies for the proposal of development alternatives based on risk management plans reflected on territorial planning proposals. In so far as these strategies are agreed to between the different actors and they arise from group discussions and approval processes, they will need to be preserved and included in major departmental and national plans.

There is a need for municipal, community and micro region associations that can share a technical office to cover all territorial management efforts in aspects such as solid waste, sewerage water, and development and risk management strategies. For this, it is necessary to reinforce municipal capacities.

Finally, it is necessary to increase and continue to support training and education processes for Local Level Risks Management.

III. INFORMATION, RESEARCH AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

III.1. WHERE DO WE STAND

After Mitch and the earthquakes that shook El Salvador in 2001, there has been a technical-scientific institutional improvement in the country's monitoring and surveillance processes. The development and installation of Early Warning Systems has reduced the probabilities of loss and damage in the last few years. The creation of the SNET or National Service for Territorial Studies has brought about a substantial change in the functioning of meteorology in El Salvador in comparison with the year Hurricane Mitch struck the country, because a process of

transformation and investment in technology has begun, which has increased the amount of computer material, local networks connected to high-speed Internet, images received by satellite, communications and the incorporation of multi-disciplinary equipment to increase the quality and amount of information for proper risk management. All the above has meant a substantial improvement in the systems for the research and monitoring of natural hydro meteorological phenomena.

Even if an important step forward has been made in the creation of a scientific-technical entity for the research, follow-up and study of natural phenomena, territorial development and planning, the support to this entity and its financial independence is limited, with respect to its responsibilities and the importance of its role in the development of the country.

In this regard, one of the obstacles in the improvement of research and the production of information is the lack of state policies favouring the search and production of technical-scientific information.

III.2. WHERE ARE WE HEADED

Efforts for the modernization of Information Systems for disaster management must continue. It is also necessary to improve research relating to vulnerability reduction and to make efforts to develop Early Warning Systems together with local authorities and the population. A process should exist for the improvement, increase and consolidation of methodologies and capacities (equipment, software, and training) for local weather, hydrological and extended hydro meteorological forecasts.

It is necessary to set up Early Warning Systems in small watersheds, as well as rapid and urban response Early Warning Systems (monitoring, communication, methodologies, software, etc.). The systems for monitoring hydro meteorological aspects, communications, capacities for the maintenance of systems and the use thereof in conjunction with social observation networks must also be improved.

A state entity is required for coordinating the efforts made by the different actors working in disaster reduction research, and for compiling and disseminating the results of the research made in this field.

One of the biggest challenges of El Salvador is to obtain the government's undertaking to encourage research and development with respect to risks, assigning a budget for developing risk management programs and projects.

Finally, there is a need for a strong and financially independent technical-scientific entity.

Annex A-3: Executive Summary of the National Report

Guatemala

I. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the objectives of the Strategic Framework to cooperate with the sustainable development of the countries of the Central American region, the heads of states of these countries committed to reducing physical, social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities and the impact of disasters.

To inform of the progress made with regard to such commitments, the following activities were carried out:

Four meetings and one National Forum, with representatives from governmental and nongovernmental organizations, various ministries, the civil society and rescue teams, which provided the necessary information to prepare a national report. Architect Manuel Pinelo of UNDP also contributed with valuable information, the Taiwanese government gave us financial support, while CEPREDENAC and UNDP, allowed us to print the Guatemalan national report.

Guatemala's National Report is basically focused on the achievements with respect to the commitments made by the Central American presidents, and also shows the progress of each sector involved. An important aspect in the preparation of this report was the participation of NGOs and the civil society, who contributed a great amount of relevant information.

What must be stressed regarding the report is the need for follow-up, support and reinforcement of the recommendations and national proposals, given their great importance for the country.

II. PROGRESS

II.1. POLICIES, SECTORAL PLANS AND STRATEGIES

II.1.1. HEALTH

In the efforts that are being made to improve the health and welfare of the Guatemalan people, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance has drawn up policies for ensuring compliance with laws relating to: preventive and curative health; actions for the protection, promotion, recovery and rehabilitation of the population's physical and mental health; the healthy preservation of the environment; the effective orientation and coordination of technical and financial cooperation in health matters; compliance with international treaties and agreements relating to health matters in case of emergencies due to epidemics and natural disasters; and steer the decentralized management of the training and educational system for health sector employees.

II.1.2. EDUCATION

Promote risk thematic in educational programs for elementary schools. This is an inter-institutional effort by CARE Guatemala, CRS, the RED CROSS and the Peace Corp, led by CONRED. It is necessary to strengthen the educational system because this is the only way to install and promote education among the population, increase school attendance of boys and girls, be more efficient, strengthen school decentralization and delivery and improve Guatemalan's personal, family and community life quality, through educational and participatory actions that help to create awareness about human dignity. The government's policy on this subject is decisive in a social development strategy.

Postgraduate courses in risk evaluation and management were imparted, as well as a Specialization in Disasters and Development at the San Carlos University of Guatemala. The San Carlos University also introduced disaster-related courses in the study plan of the Faculty of Medical Sciences. Among the agreements that were signed are those by CONRED, USAC and CARE regarding the training program for rural development and risk management promoters at a certified level, with the purpose of strengthening technical capacities in development planning with a risk management approach.

II.1.3. AGRICULTURE

An agricultural policy was implemented, whose main objective is to contribute to the improvement of the rural population's living conditions in general, based on production systems compatible with the preservation and sustainable use of renewable natural resources and the equitable participation of all the sectors that contribute to the development of this sector.

II.1.4. HOUSING, HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND ENVIRONMENT

The national policy on housing and human settlements was formulated, whose main objective is to set the basis that can help to increase Guatemalan's welfare and quality of life, especially the poorest groups and the ones excluded from peace agreements. An agricultural policy was necessary in order to improve the living conditions of the rural population in general, based on production systems compatible with the preservation and durable use of natural renewable resources and the equitable participation of all the sectors that contribute to the development of this sector, with certain advances in political and legal aspects.

II.1.5. ENERGY

The Indicative Plan for the Electric Power Sub-sector was drawn up in order to comply with following objectives: a) guide the sub-sector in becoming a central point of the economic, social and environmental development of the country; b) serve as guiding tool for decisions regarding investments, whether public, private, national or international. The Ministry of Energy and Mining is the entity in charge of drawing up and coordinating policies, state plans and indicative programs relating to the energy sector.

II.1.6. FOOD AND NUTRITION

Within the agricultural policy, the food security policy is included as a priority action area, which is aimed at guaranteeing the production, sustainable supply, adequate access and creation of favourable nutritional conditions for the consumption of basic foods. The national health plan presents a component to the food and nutritional security theme. The National Food and Nutritional Security Council (CONSAN) was created by means of the government agreement 55-2002, which entity was in charge of designing and coordinating the execution of five integrated

work programs, namely: school feeding, production and community availability of food, education for work, community health and information systems for food and nutritional security.

II.2. LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The following are the **Laws and regulations** available:

- Decree Law 109-96 of the National Coordinator for the Reduction of Natural or Provoked Disasters, with the purpose of preventing, mitigating, attending to and participating in the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts following the damage caused by the effects of disasters.
- Social Development Law (Decree No. 42-2001),
- Law on Urban and Rural Development Councils (Decree No. 11-2002),
- General Law on Decentralization (Decree No. 14-2002),
- New Municipal Code (Decree No. 12-2002),
- Law on Adjudication and Sale (Decree No. 84-2002),
- Among the Regulations are: Government Agreement No. 179-2001, Declaration of Amatitlan, Villalobos and Michatoya sub-watersheds as High-Risk Area; and
- Government Agreement No.23-2003, environmental assessment, control and follow-up regulation.

II.3. INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING FOR EMERGENCIES MANAGEMENT

With a view to strengthening Guatemalan institutions, a solid national response and natural disaster reduction system is under construction, and it will consolidate CONRED's efforts in its role as coordinating entity that is constantly looking forward to assure institutional efforts and to work closer with governmental and nongovernmental institutions, which are in charge of emergency response and management , as well as to progressively introduce an institutional culture through the establishment of general procedures for disaster management.

Within the context of the institutional strengthening process, we have the Emergency Operation Center (COE), which is the first one in the Central American and Caribbean region including organization, educational and equipment aspects. As a coordinating entity, CONRED has established a national coordination mechanism that enables actors to work at the national level.

Plans and actions intended for reinforcing and improving emergency response capacities and humanitarian actions will be undertaken. For this, we have a National Response Plan, an Emergency Management Integrated System, we have to strengthen rescue systems, and we also have a National Multi-Sectoral Management System for Risk Reduction in the Republic of Guatemala.

II.4. STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR RISK MANAGEMENT

Various programs were carried out for the reduction of risks, for example, risk reduction related to natural disaster in metropolitan area settlements, whose objective was to educate and organize communities and promote inter-institutional participation. As to education, permanent educational programs were designed for the prevention of disasters, educating teachers and

students. The local actors belonging to coordinating entities were also involved in these activities so as to obtain a better local response capacity.

II.5. EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS (EWS)

Early Warning Systems (EWS) are operational structures made up of individuals, institutions and the necessary instruments, whose purpose is to provide response, monitoring and control measures in the event of natural phenomena that can cause disasters. It also aims at saving lives and allowing local authorities and the population to apply measures to minimize damage and effects.

The monitoring process of natural phenomena carried out by the Executive Secretariat of CONRED is basically ensured through eleven Early Warning Systems in the same amount of rivers, i.e. seven for floods, two for volcanoes, one for forest fires and one for hurricanes in the Atlantic. In addition, another type of system, based on radios, has been installed in key points of the country by international cooperation agencies and the civil society. The communication networks for Early Warning Systems need to be more comprehensive so as to strengthen and increase the efforts that are being made at the national level to establish an effective monitoring system. The number of qualified persons is insufficient regarding the capacities to forecast hydro meteorological and geological nature phenomena (earthquakes, volcano eruptions, landslides and tidal waves). The specialization on this technical field is supported by INSIVUMEH (National Institute of Seismology, Vulcanology, Meteorology and Hydrology) and the Executive Secretariat of CONRED, due to its specific characteristics and its importance in emergency related aspects; besides, it has already accumulated the experiences and updated technological equipment for the monitoring of natural phenomena. The INSIVUMEH has become for the system, an important institution in this field, and there is also support from regional and international systems, especially those located in the USA, for the specific monitoring of hydro meteorological threats.

Currently, the country counts on hydrological monitoring systems in the watersheds, as also the ongoing Early Warning System project for Hurricanes in the Atlantic area.

II.6. INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

With the purpose of improving threat information in order to reduce vulnerabilities and disaster impact, some public sector institutions, NGOs, CONRED, INSIVUMEH, MAGA , SEGEPLAN, USGS, among others, have developed a Geographical Information System (SIG) as an tool to consolidate the information management strategy. MAGA (Ministry of Agriculture, Cattle Raising and Food) implemented a natural disasters emergency program; the IGN (National Geographic Institute) has a digital cartographic base; INSIVUMEH rehabilitated hydro meteorological stations in some watersheds, an inter-institutional platform was established between CONRED, INSIVUMEH and MAGA for the creation of a Early Warning Systems in 4 problematic watersheds (Achíguate, María Linda, Motagua and Polochic).

The basic cartography provided by IGN appears in the last editions of the topographic maps for 1998. The geological and hydro meteorological maps that the IGN has drawn up on different scales are the basis for various threat studies; INSIVUMEH, MAGA, USGS and CONRED as

well as other organizations have produced most of the cartographic information on natural threats; their maps on landslides, seismology, floods, vulcanology, among others, constitute the cartographic input on which threat, vulnerability and risk studies in Guatemala are based. Most of this cartographic information is on paper and, in many cases are unique models.

CONRED has a special section for Information and Geographic Information Systems. So far this section has produced some digital maps used as a basis by the IGN, among which are maps indicating volcano coverage, potential flooding areas and geological faults.

The sectoral panorama is far from being the essential aspect to reduce the vulnerabilities accumulated in the country. The organized civil society and international cooperation agencies are apparently those whose presence is stronger locally with regard to initiatives for the prevention, attention and mitigation of disasters, although, comparatively, there are limitations between geographical coverage and the impact desired.

The most important aspect that we must highlight in this national report for Guatemala is the following:

We must lay stress on the recommendations and national proposals and take into account the fact of the alternate change of the governmental authorities, thus we must present this report to the new authorities in order to ensure proper follow-up and to continue to strengthen even more the strategies designed for disasters prevention and mitigation, concentrating our efforts on the protection of human beings.

Delia Pineda

Cooperation - CONRED
Guatemala, January 2004

Annex A-4: Executive Summary of the National Report

Honduras

I. INTRODUCTION

For Central Americans, the consequences of natural disasters and the task of reducing vulnerabilities (physical, economic, social and environmental) in order to minimize their impact represent a common cause, which has motivated the countries of the region to sign a regional strategy called “**Strategic Framework for Vulnerability and Disasters Reduction in Central America**”, hereinafter referred to as Strategic Framework. It is an instrument to orient strategies, plans and programs for handling the vulnerabilities of the territories and populations that are more exposed to the problems caused by disasters (Guatemala 1999). The Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC) is the entity in charge of following up on our compliance with this commitment.

The document presented below corresponds to a review of how we have advanced nationally in complying with this strategy five years after the most transcendental event in this region during this period, Hurricane and Tropical Storm Mitch. This review is presented as an improvement consideration and proposal, based on 4 principal components: i) Sectoral Plans and Strategies; ii) Strengthening Local Capacities for Risk Reduction; iii) Information Systems; and iv) Institutional Strengthening. We will use as starting point the contents of each component, according to what the SF establishes, dealing with the political, legal, institutional and pragmatic aspects of each component.

Honduras made efforts to make this review become a wide and participatory space for reflection, including all the national actors involved in risk management. For this, the National Consultation Process on Mitch+5 was prepared, with the participation of central government institutions, cooperation groups, the civil society, specialized organizations for emergency response, local governments, experts, universities and local organizations. The process was led by the Permanent Commission of Contingencies (COPECO), an institution in charge of this theme.

The process included the conduction of 7 local workshops in a given number of regions of the country, mini workshops called inter-sectoral roundtables (a total of 8), the preparation of technical reference documents of each theme to facilitate a collective discussion and the two-day national forum. A central team was in charge of the consultation’s technical direction. It is worth noting that during the whole process, national and international NGOs gave their support, as well as related programs and projects. These became strategic allies who contributed to the process and the national document: belligerent reflections, knowledge and experiences, as well as technical and financial support for the forum.

It is important to stress that this reflection is not an official assessment of the national progress in this regard because this would mean involving and coordinating with other governmental actors’, however, the elements, criteria and results obtained correspond to a consensus where the majority of the institutions and organizations are represented, which have the capacity and experience to rank and assess objectively the country’s progress and challenges with regard to the Strategic Framework and our own territorial, political and cultural characteristics.

II. ABSTRACT

Hurricane Mitch affected 90% of the national territory, and damages caused the country a social and economical regression of approximately 10 years, increasing the poverty levels with which they were already struggling. More than 50,000 houses were destroyed, 70% of the roads were damaged, with the destruction of 90 bridges, 1,700 drinking water systems were damaged, etc. Floods destroyed fields, hindering production capacities for up to 10 years. The losses sustained in the industry and commercial sectors, as well as the loss in urban development, in addition to their absolute value, brought about unemployment, flight of capital, productive and economic involution. The irreparable loss of more than 12,000 Hondurans who perished (killed or missing), and the aggravation of poverty, are today the most lamentable facts that evidences our deepest vulnerability.

To review the country's progress five years after Mitch, we based ourselves on the document **"Strategic Framework for Vulnerability and Disasters Reduction in Central America"**, where the 4 components are included: i) Sectoral Plans and Strategies; ii) Strengthening of Local Capacities for Risk Reduction; iii) Information Systems; iv) Institutional Strengthening. The political, legal, institutional and pragmatic aspects of each component were analyzed.

The National Document was prepared in a consultative manner, with local and central governmental actors, the civil society and cooperation corps. The results show that we have indeed progressed, mainly in terms of reconstruction, the creation of sectoral policies, and the development of local skills and experiences for risk management. It was determined that this progress is relative to the magnitude of the damage caused by Mitch, not necessarily based on how we should have advanced in order to be less vulnerable and face the impact of natural disasters with more capacity. Still present are some key questions about What is our future with regard to this theme?, How we are advancing toward the real reduction of vulnerabilities? Is it considered to be a key element in planning and national development policies and strategies?

Following is a summary of the progress made in the institutional, pragmatic, legal and political aspects of the 4 components that were analyzed:

III. INSTITUTIONAL RESULTS

There has been significant progress in the following aspects: i) The theme has been specifically mentioned in sectoral plans and strategies ii) In some institutions functional spaces and programs for risk management have been established. iii) The theme has been included in coordination and planning efforts with local governments. iv) programs have been created which focus on the management of natural resources: watersheds, forests, vulnerable zones, environment; v) Participatory methodologies that assess the territorial context according to its vulnerabilities have also been created; vi) Experiences, lessons learned, methods, etc., which are used as reference today in order to establish programs and projects; and vii) Amendments to sectoral laws which, in addition, assume responsibilities in this regard.

Some important advances that are worth mentioning are: the creation of a National Health Plan for Disaster Reduction and Response, the issuance of a Policy for the Agro-feeding and Rural Environment sector in Honduras 203-21-SAG, the Honduran Social Investment Fund (FHIS) has created a Strategic Plan for Contingencies, more complete and specific institutional information about the characteristics of vulnerability is available, there are manuals to educate and teach how to manage the different kinds of risks, material that can be consulted has been produced, there are also different plans for risk management at the local level, new university careers and secondary techniques in risk management, community forestry, ecology, environment; the

theme inclusion in institutional development plans, guidelines and rules have been established for the execution of projects with risk components (road construction, disaster mitigation measures in water and sanitation projects, health and educational establishments, etc.), and others, that will be better explained in each sector.

IV. RESULTS WITH REGARD TO LOCAL CAPACITIES

Some of the advances are: the establishment of the CODEL and CODEM, the development of emergency plans, threat maps, the inclusion of Municipalities in risk and environmental management, the inclusion of communities in the preservation of natural resources, NGOs that have developed specific capacities for risk management, contributing their knowledge to the reinforcement of local capacities through projects, the creation of educational programs, management manuals, etc. We must add that these actions do not arise from a national territorial strategy, but to the initiatives of the sectors, the NGOs, and local governments. A coordination strategy is required to join and better distribute efforts and resources at the local level: comprehensive regional programs, networks, etc.

We can assert that national institutions have acquired the capacity to issue a more rapid response toward disasters, which would be important to include in national plans that orient this response and that constitute more organized prevention efforts. The experience gained by COPECO and the need to strengthen this institution based on its position as a leading entity in this theme require a stronger economic, technical, political and legal support than what is currently given to this institution. An important aspect where the Forum reached a consensus was the implementation of a National Risk Management System, and the need for this system to be given a higher priority in the government's agenda.

V. LEGAL RESULTS

Legal reforms for housing and urban and rural development are much needed for controlling risk-free constructions. As to Legal Framework adjustments there is a strong movement, reforms and new proposals that are related to risk management, namely: The Territorial Planning Law (recently enacted in November 2003), the Water and Sanitation Law (June 2003), the bill for a new Forestry Law; besides, there is an increase in the number of institutional regulations including risk management: roads, environmental projects, aqueducts and sewerage system, school and health establishments. There has been some progress in the preparation of a Construction Code and the need to define this project. Another proposed law which is urgent is the one that would offer a specific support to risk management in the country, which would be supporting a new COPECO as the coordinator of a national system, just as the actual Coordinators in the other Central American countries.

VI. RESULTS IN PRAGMATIC ADVANCES

Valuable, innovative and effective experiences have been identified, as well as management models that can be emulated, an enormous potential and aggregate value for risk management; especially through specific or closely related projects (more than 30 were identified). In the absence of spaces for exchanges, inventories, analysis of these experiences, as well as the necessary coordination to better utilize them, the revalorization thereof and their influence on national plans and policies has been proposed. We must also stress the existence of extensive projects relating to integrated management in watersheds and the preservation of natural resources. Also proposed are follow-up, assessment and systematization works, as well as the

socialization of the efforts made on programs and projects and of the functions of governmental sectors, as risk management capital, in order to ensure a stronger, complementary and effective support to this theme, in Honduras.

VII. RESULTS OF FINANCIAL ADVANCES

Financial progresses were not dealt with in this document, precisely due to the lack of follow-up on investments in vulnerability reduction, and given the fact that for this it is necessary to have an official version from the government, which is deemed necessary and convenient after five years of progress.

VIII. RESULTS OF POLITICAL ADVANCES

The great challenge for the capitalization, improvement and sustainability of the advances mentioned is how the country supports the institutional, legal and operational efforts within the framework of a State Policy. The theme has been included in the political agendas of governments, such as the Strategy to Eradicate Poverty, but not in the more important discussions to plan the government's platform, and it has a very small place in the national budget. In view of the fact that this is a highly vulnerable country, and considering that, as it was demonstrated with Mitch, the impact of natural disasters causes serious economic, social and environmental disorders, it is important for this theme to have a better position in national development efforts. Today we can affirm that the efforts made are worthy of praise, but that we are still vulnerable.

The most important considerations regarding the process are:

1. A systematic, technological and objective assessment of territorial vulnerabilities, with a national information process at different levels that can allow the incorporation of risk management in central and local institutional development plans.
2. The capitalization of the experiences had in different themes with regard to reconstruction, vulnerabilities management, etc., seeking their possible replication, political influence and the possibility of programming interventions in the country's most vulnerable areas.
3. The redefinition and operation of a National Risk Management System showing guidelines for coordinating efforts and strengthening the institutions related thereto, in conjunction with the legal framework that ensures its development.
4. Improve the position of the theme of vulnerabilities and risk management in the governmental agenda through the creation of a State Policy that serves as a basis for an integrated management, with goals and a future in the national development.
5. Improvement of the position of risk management and vulnerability reduction in the national budget, through the budget of related institutions and public investment.
6. The cost-benefit of preventive investments is an investment for the country's sustainable development.

Annex A-5: Executive Summary of the National Report

Nicaragua

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the second half of the XX century, disasters caused by natural phenomena have become more serious; the growth of the human specie and the aggravation of catastrophes have increased the number of victims and material damages. In Central America alone, economic loss relating to disasters has increased since 1970.

In response to the growing global concern caused by these important natural events, the United Nations General Assembly declared, in December 1989, the 90s decade, as the “International Decency for the Reduction of Natural Disasters”.

During this period, various international events took place, whose fundamental purpose was to share experiences, views and plans for the reduction of vulnerability in our countries.

In response to the post Mitch challenges, the “*Strategic Framework for Vulnerability and Disasters Reduction in Central America*” was approved in October 1999, at the twentieth Summit of Presidents of Central America and The Dominican Republic, within the context of what was called “The Central American Quinquennium for the Reduction of Vulnerabilities and the Impact of Disasters, 2000-2004”

This report presents the progress, achievements and most significant lessons learned in our country with respect to the Central American Strategic Framework.

The principal results of this effort can be seen in the following fields of operation:

1. - Sectoral Strategies and Plans.
2. - Institutional Strengthening for Emergencies Management.
3. - Local capacities for Risk Management.
4. - Information, Research and Early Warning Systems (EWS).

II. SECTORAL STRATEGIES AND PLANS

II.1. RESULTS AT THE CENTRAL LEVEL

At the central institutional level, the following efforts have been made in the country:

- **National Risk Reduction Program (PNRR)²**

This was created by means of a broad inquiry conducted with the civil society and governmental sectors, which design programs and projects relating to risk management and emergency situations.

- **National Plan for Disaster Response (PNRDN)**

This outlines the principal response actions for imminent events that are potentially hazardous, as well as the duties of the sectoral work commissions.

² It was created with UNDP's support.

- **National Training and Educational Plan³**

Its main objective is to strengthen institutional and organizational capacities for risk management and disaster reduction.

- **Risk Management Roundtable**

Set up as a permanent space for theoretical and practical discussions, as well as dialogue on risk management, with the purpose of establishing cooperation and inter-learning relations among the key sectors of the civil society and the government.

- **Other important results**

Other meaningful results of the sectoral component at the central level can be found in: The existence of a regulatory framework, the preparation of a methodological response to work on Risk Management at the territorial and central levels, the training proposed in risk management for central government experts, the preparation of a manual for the Disaster Operation Center (CODE), the creation of a national mitigation program, the revision and updating of the construction code, the definition of a voluntary resettlement policy, the drafting of the formal educational plan including a risk management approach, the creation of a communication and training strategy for journalists; the organization of 4 national drills to test the response capacity of social and administrative infrastructure upon the occurrence of potentially dangerous events.

II.2. RESULTS AT THE SECTORAL LEVEL

The progress made in each sector can be seen in the development of the following projects, programs and initiatives:

II.2.1. EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

- Psychosocial attention for the most vulnerable sectors affected by Hurricane Mitch (UNICEF – Red Cross)
- Training and specialization of school brigades in handling emergency situations
- Study on the physical vulnerability of educational institutions of: Ometepe and district VI (OAS).
- Drafting of the sectoral response plan (PRIS)
- Adaptation and adoption of the humanitarian charter and the minimum standards in disaster response⁴
- Formation of first aid and forest fire prevention brigades.
- Preparation of school emergency plans in educational institutions in Managua.
- Creation and execution of a master's degree program in environmental studies for disasters prevention and mitigation (Engineering University – UNI)
- Creation and execution of a master's degree program in environmental management (Geoscientific Research Center – UNAM – Managua).

II.2.2. HEALTH SECTOR

- Elaboration of local sanitary emergency plans in 153 municipalities of the country (Pan-American Health Organization – OPS).
- Elaboration of 17 hospital plans for managing emergency situations in case of disaster.

³ It was created under the auspices of UNDP and the humanitarian bureau of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (COSUDE).

⁴ Sphere project.

- Definition of regulations for the institutions comprising the health sector.
- Adaptation of the Supply Distribution System (SUMA) in the management of medical supplies.
- Creation of a guide on how to handle persons with disabilities in case of disaster.
- Ministerial resolution that includes the vulnerability reduction factor in the health sector's infrastructure.
- Physical vulnerability study in 5 hospitals and 10 assistance centers or shelters of the country.
- Editing and distribution of 15,000 pocket book copies of Law 337.

II.2.3. ENVIRONMENTAL SECTOR

- Elaboration and establishment of an institutional strategic plan (PEI) for the transformation and strengthening process of national, regional and local environmental management.
- Drawing up of the 2001-2005 Environmental Plan for Nicaragua, its objective is to tackle the principal environmental problems and meet global challenges and threats in an effective manner.
- Definition of the reassignment strategy to pave the way for the transfer of duties and responsibilities to municipalities, placing regulations in the hands of central institutions and environmental management and monitoring tasks under local institutions.
- Creation of the General Directorate for Environmental Norms (elaborating norms for declaring environmental emergencies).
- Creation of the General Directorate for Environmental Regulation (Decree 45-94) for the environmental permits issued by MARENA (includes risk management in environmental impact studies).
- Socio-environmental and Forest Development Program (POSAF), which includes:
 - ✧ Development of methodologies to work with a risk management approach in 24 municipalities.
 - ✧ Creation of maps indicating threats.
 - ✧ Mitigation works in micro- watersheds
 - ✧ Creation of the National Bureau for Clean Development
 - ✧ Creation of the General Directorate for Institutional Environmental Planning

II.2.3.1. OTHER RELEVANT INITIATIVES OF THE SECTOR

- Institutional and Sectoral Environmental Response Plan (PRIS/2003)
- Strategic plan against forest fires
- National forest health strategy
- Biodiversity National Strategy
- Environmental policy for Nicaragua
- Forest Law and its regulations
- Law on the use and handling of agrochemicals
- Environmental management units
- Regulations for protected areas
- Law for the protection of new plant varieties
- Law creating environment and natural resources as a subject
- Special law for the exploration and exploitation of mines and its regulations

II.3. INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING FOR EMERGENCIES MANAGEMENT

As part of the development of strategies for the reduction of vulnerabilities and the impact of disasters in Nicaragua, policies and plans have been created, as well as actions to strengthen response capacity of the institutions and the population have been developed.

The entire work has been backed by work commissions⁵ made up of various sectors linked directly with risk reduction and disaster response. These sectoral work commissions are:

- **Education and Information Commission**
- **Security Commission**
- **Health Commission**
- **Environment and Natural Resources Commission**
- **Supplies Commission**
- **Transportation and Infrastructure Commission**
- **Special Operations Commission**
- **Natural Phenomena Commission**
- **Consumer Defense Commission**

II.4. STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR RISK MANAGEMENT

The execution and establishment of the following projects and initiatives evidence the work carried out in this field:

- “Training of individuals for their integration into the national disaster prevention and mitigation system” Project (UNDP-COSUDE).
- « Supporting risks management in 6 municipalities of Nicaragua within the framework of the national disaster prevention and mitigation system” Project.
- « Local support of the natural risk analysis» Project, which endowed 28 municipalities of the country with tools for conducting risk analyses; municipal plans for the reduction of vulnerabilities were also proposed.
- “Local level risk management in the Autonomous Regions of the North Atlantic” Project (UNDP-IPADE-SINAPRED), whereby a process for training community facilitators in risk management was developed.
- “Vulnerability Reduction Project in Nicaragua”. Formation and training of 75 municipal committees for disaster prevention, mitigation and management (World Bank – Civil Defense).
- “Disaster preparedness in 6 municipalities and 18 places of Region II” Project (CARE-Civil Defense).
- “Early Warning System at San Cristobal Volcano” Project (ECHO-DIPECHO-Civil Defense).
- “Risk Management focused on children and adolescents » Project (Norway’s Save the Children-Civil Defense).
- “Prevention, mitigation and management of disasters in the Prinzapolka Municipality” Project (CIPS-ECHO-DIPECHO).
- “Training of individuals for their integration into the SINAPRED-Phase II” Project (UNDP-COSUDE).

⁵ See the principal achievements and lessons learned of the sectoral commissions in the annex.

II.4.1. Other initiatives that have contributed to the strengthening of local capacities

In order to include the risk factor in the municipal planning system a Municipal Technical Guidebook was prepared; a school program was also created comprising 8 risk management modules (CARE-Civil Defense); and a postgraduate course in risk management for civil defense instructors (CARE-SINAPRED-UNI).

II.5. INFORMATION, RESEARCH AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

Great efforts have been made in Nicaragua to strengthen the surveillance and control systems for natural phenomena so as to reduce the impact of potentially hazardous events. For this, they try to inform the public of the measures and recommendation to be adopted sufficiently in advance.

The most important and visible results obtained in this component are:

- The systematic monitoring by INETER of the information produced by the international forecast centers.
- The installation of two workstations for receiving high-resolution images
- Establishment of a forecast system for the swelling of river watersheds: Escondido and Estero Real.
- Installation of a network for preventing the swelling of the Rio Malacatoya watershed.
- Installation of 57 seismic stations transmitting information in real time.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

COMPONENT	CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Strategies and Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The documents on strategy and policy have not been sufficiently disseminated. - There are very important plans, policies and programs in the educational field that have not been included in any common strategy. - The decentralization process offers the opportunity to reinforce the risk management component in the educational field. - At the local level, there are no laws defining and regulating the relations among the institutions that work on the prevention of forest fires. -Nicaragua is one of the least polluted countries with respect to gas issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Systematize and use Risk Management experiences to satisfy specific needs in the country. -Include the Risk Management approach in the study programs for basic, middle and higher education. -Systematize the Civil Society's experiences in Risk Management and share them on a website.
Institutional Strengthening	<p>The legal ground for institutionalization is Law 337.</p> <p>Law 337 established the structures and organizations that act on risk management from their respective areas of expertise.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SE-SINAPRED must have a bearing on all the institutions that are part of the system in order to improve the support and participation of Liaison Experts. - Include in the system's budget, funds to finance the activities carried out by the Liaison Technical Unit. - Prevent the Executive Secretariat from assigning duties entrusted to other governmental institutions that are part of the national prevention system. - Regulate, through the enactment of a law, the compulsory adoption of the Municipal Planning System with a risk approach by all municipalities. -Establish a follow-up plan in the management of domestic and industrial solid waste. - Ensure permanent follow-up of institutional participation in the prevention of and response to forest fires.
Strengthening local capacities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are many organizations and institutions working on Risk Management, but the contents and approach of their work is very broad. 	<p>Municipal governments must seize the instruments on Risk Management that have been made available to them.</p> <p>Establish a Risk Management Commission in each municipality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and effectively apply the local and institutional capacities of each one of the commissions located in the territories. - Establish and promote coordination among the institutions that handle the local level risk management. - Decentralize responsibilities and resources at the municipal level.

<p>Information Research and Early Warning Systems (EWS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research and information is limited to a few institutions due to the high costs and little financial advantages for researchers. - There is a lot of information on this subject, but written in a very technical and inaccessible language, which is disseminated and shared in reduced circles of experts and scientists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Produce educational material understandable by all, with basic concepts such as: green, yellow and red alert, etc. Include measures in the regional budget to guarantee the functioning and maintenance of monitoring networks and EAS. - Guarantee the dissemination of the results of projects carried out by INETER. - Guarantee the nation's technical capacity to conduct research. - Equip territorial units with communication means that allow the reinforcement of local capacities. - Orient research work toward understanding phenomena and not only toward monitoring and recording of data. - Create mechanisms that allow experts to report how the pine grove ecosystem is being restored in the areas affected by the decorticator weave.
<p>Contribution to Nongovernmental Organizations working on Development issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is necessary to act at different levels, i.e. local, national and regional, in order to achieve development. - When working at the municipal level, it is better to use local resources. - The work done at the local level can be fruitful and positive. - In order to reach the objectives proposed, it is necessary to work and set goals achievable at medium term. 	<p>Work at the local level must continue.</p> <p>It is necessary to promote education at all levels, beginning with the basics.</p> <p>Include all the sectors in risk management.</p>

Annex A-6: Executive Summary of the National Report

Panama

I. ABSTRACT

On the fifth anniversary of Mitch passing through the Region last October 2003, it became necessary to review the current situation of this event in our country, which is why the Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), with the assistance of international, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, conducted a Regional Forum regarding the lessons learned, initiatives, preparedness and response capacity five years after the event.

Our country was not declared an emergency zone after Hurricane Mitch; however, it was affected by this hydro meteorological event, especially in the Province of Darien. The government assigned resources to mitigate and attend the damage caused to agricultural, educational and infrastructure sectors.

During the emergency in 1999, the Inter-American Development Bank helped the Republic of Panama through the National Civil Protection System, with the Project for the *“Strengthening of Community Organization in the Province of Darien in order to reduce the effects caused by Hurricane Mitch”*.

Prevention is incipient in the region and Panama is not excluded from this reality. The Hurricane Mitch experience evidenced the fragility of the existing systems with respect to this theme. Irrespective of the efforts made on information, educational campaigns, changes and adjustments to the disaster-related laws in place, development programs had not been integrated into planning institutions, the private sector and the civil society, in order to prevent and mitigate the impact of disasters. This caused the persistence of socio-economic inequalities and therefore, a high level of vulnerability for the population, the disorderly allocation of natural resources and the creation of risk situations where they should not exist.

For this reason, our country was forced to prepare and put into practice a series of development projects in disaster prevention and mitigation, benefiting the most vulnerable regions of the nation and involving the population as active guardians of their security.

The National Government headed by President Mireya Moscoso has made efforts and taken initiatives in the disaster prevention and mitigation theme, promoting the theme of “risk management”, through the National Civil Protection System, as a transversal axis in development processes, with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), by means of the Project on “Local Level Risk Management in Darien”.

Efforts must be aimed at reducing vulnerabilities acting on the causes that generate disasters and not focusing only on emergencies, and in this manner we will minimize the number of victims and persons affected by these adverse events.

Finally, in 2005, through the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the risk management theme will be included in investment programs as a mechanism for promoting a Public Policy that considers risk management in all of the country’s development processes, with the purpose of planning according to risks and not with risks, trying to reduce the impact of these unfavourable events in the Republic of Panama.

II. THE COUNTRY UP AGAINST ADVERSE EVENTS

The Republic of Panama, with a population of approximately 37% living in poverty, including urban poverty which has forced them to concentrate in highly vulnerable areas, such as San Miguelito, Juan Díaz, Alcalde Díaz, among others, following spontaneous urban development patterns that do not comply with construction rules; and also, cultural habits that have created poorly hygienic consumption patterns (accumulation of trash at water sources, underground dumps in any corner of the city). Cities of the country are living in constant risk, most likely, Panama and Colón, and varied risk levels persist in the rest of the cities.

The country has active geological faults that are important: the Tonosi Fault, Panama's Fracture Zone, the Gatun Fault, the deformed belt of northern Panama, just to name a few. In case of a strong earthquake, especially urban centers would be seriously affected, with an aftermath dominated by lack of services and disease control.

Events such as earthquake that shook the Provinces of Bocas del Toro and Chiriqui in 1991, the passing of **Hurricane Mitch in its Tropical Storm phase** close to the Panamanian coast in the Province of Darien in 1998, the seismic movements in Chiriqui in 2001, and in Colon in 2003, the water spouts seen on Panama's bay area in 2002 and in August 2003. These are events that evidence that community preparedness and participation is needed to face the severity with which disasters have affected the countries of the region.

The organizations in charge of prevention, mitigation, emergency and disaster management, among which are the National Protection System and the institutions that are part of it, have made efforts to minimize the risks that communities face when affected by potentially hazardous events that reach our country.

A number of actions have been carried out to educate the community so as to prepare it and specialized groups and strengthen disaster response as a principal management aspect, however, risk evaluation and management have not been emphasized in the same manner.

This is how the Republic of Panama has carried out a number of programs, projects and initiatives, with a view to preserving the life and assets of the community, especially those who live in vulnerable areas, trying to reduce, as much as possible, the risks to which these communities are exposed.

III- CEPREDENAC NATIONAL COMMISSION

The National Commission of the Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC) was created by means of Executive Decree 402 of November 12, 2002.

The members of CEPREDENAC's National Commission were called to take action as the country's representatives for the preparation of the National Report to inform the Central American Region of the current status, the difficulties and the progress made in the reduction of vulnerabilities in the Republic of Panama, five years after the passing of Hurricane Mitch in 1998.

CEPREDENAC's National Commission is integrated as follows:

CEPREDENAC's National Commission-PANAMA		
#	National Institutions	Commissioners
1	National Civil Protection System	Arturo Alvarado De Icaza, its chairman
2	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Janio Tuñon
3	Ministry of Economy and Finance	Sergio Melais Edgar Ivancovich
4	Ministry of Education	Carmen de Moncada
5	Ministry of Public Works	Federico Bécquer
6	Ministry of Health	Guillermo Arana
7	Ministry of Housing	Hernando Carrasquilla
8	Ministry of Agricultural Development	Rolando Gálvez
9	National Environmental Authority	Bolívar Pérez
10	Social Security Fund	Omar Sánchez
11	Civil Engineering Faculty: Technological University of Panama	Obdulía de Guizado
12	Geoscience's Institute of the University of Panama	Eduardo Camacho
13	Empresa de Transmisión Eléctrica S.A. (<i>Electric Power Transmission Company</i>)	Edilberto Esquivel

Organizing Committee for the Mitch+5 National Report:

General Coordinator of the Report: Rafael Bonilla, National Civil Protection System

#	THEMATIC COMPONENTS	PERSON IN CHARGE	INSTITUTION
1	Sectoral Strategies and Plans	Sergio Melais Edgar Ivancovich	Ministry of Economy and Finance
2	Institutional Strengthening for Emergency Management	Rafael Bonilla Kira Puga	National Civil Protection System
3	Strengthening Local Capacities for Risk Management	Guillermo Arana Federico Armien Lorenzo Barraza	Ministry of Health Social Security Fund
4	Information, Research and Early Warning Systems	Obdulía de Guizado Carmen de Moncada Carlos Centella	Technological University Ministry of Education Empresa de Transmisión Eléctrica, S.A.

To prepare this report, Civil Society entities were consulted, namely:

- Inter-Institutional Information Exchange among the members of CEPREDENAC-PANAMA's National Commission
- *Asociación de Municipios de Panamá* (Panama Association of Municipalities)
- National Police
- *Servicio Aéreo Nacional* (National Air Service)
- *Servicio Marítimo Nacional* (National Maritime Service)
- *Universidad de las Américas* (University of the Americas)
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- *Centro del Agua del Trópico Húmedo para América Latina y el Caribe* (Water Center for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean) (*CATHALAC*, Spanish Acronym).

Other members of the Civil Society were convened, but they made no contributions since they did not participate in the National Forum that was called to validate this National Report.

Annex B-1:

THEMATIC SESSION “A”: SECTORAL STRATEGIES AND PLANS

FINAL RAPPATEUR’S REPORT

SPEAKERS:

Guatemala:	Susana Palma, General Planning Secretariat (SEGEPLAN)
El Salvador:	Miguel Salazar, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Honduras:	Presentations by sector: Francisco Salinas, Health and Food Security Sector – World Food Program (WFP) Gonzalo Cruz, Education Sector - Honduras Autonomous National University (UNAH) José A. Castro, Housing and Human Settlements Sector, Industrial Sector, Transportation Sector, Energy Sector, Infrastructure Sector - Secretariat of Public Buildings, Transportation and Livelihoods of Honduras (SOPTRAVI). José Reyes, Territorial Planning - Center of Environmental Studies in Honduras (CEAH)
Nicaragua:	Clemente Balmaceda, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MTI)
Costa Rica:	Carlos Picado, National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Response (CNE).
Panama:	Sergio Melais, Ministry of Economy and Finance
Facilitator:	Adfell Vega – Deputy, Institute for the Development and Democracy - Nicaragua (IPADE)
Rappateur:	Linda Zilbert – UNDP Cuba

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOALS

A. POLITICAL ASPECTS

A.1. CONCLUSIONS

- There is political evidence of the creation and existence of actions facilitating risk management. Support: engagements contracted in two (2) Presidents’ Summits, Signatories of Regional Initiatives, such as CEPREDENAC, SICA, the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development, the Puebla Panama Plan, the Strategic Framework for Vulnerability and Risk Reduction in Central America and the Tuxtla Gutiérrez I and IV mechanism. Although there is evidence of regional commitments, there is no evident application thereof in national contexts.
- We conclude that risk reduction is a transversal axis in some sectors as a regional proposal. However, its application is still not evident at the country level.
- In some countries the application of a territorial planning policy is being promoted. However, the Territorial Planning law itself does not guarantee the application of risk management.

A.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Development plans of each country should consider the risk management approach.
- Reinforce the influence capacity of regional counterparts connected to risk management, even if this means modifying their vision and mission.
- Reinforce national counterparts responsible for defining national policies for risk management.

- Incorporate risk reduction in all other sectors, whether the production, the services or the social sector.
- Include the risk management approach in the legal framework or within the operations structure, at the local, national and regional level (considering shared watersheds management between countries, Trifinio project, Central American Biological Corridor within the context of the Puebla Panama Plan, and the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor.
- Governments must facilitate the search of financial resources and technical assistance on the side of the cooperation for development that includes the risk management approach.
- Inter-sectoral and inter-institutional coordination must be strengthened, both at the national and regional level.
- Strengthen municipalities so as to incorporate risk management into their development plans and programs.
- Decentralization processes must consider systems for the fair distribution of resources, so that local governments that have less resources may incorporate risk management into development processes.

A.3. GOALS

- Promote development programs of each country, which must include the risk management approach.
- Promote the inclusion of the risk management approach into the regional, sectoral and national political agendas.
- Support plans for territorial planning with a risk management approach that operates in all the countries as the basis for development planning.
- Assure that regional and national counterparts on risk management are strengthened and working in a coordinated manner.
- Promote the risk management culture like an active among populations as a result of regional and national development policies.

B. INSTITUTIONAL ASPECT

B.1. CONCLUSIONS

- Risk management must be institutionalized and in order to do it is necessary to work according to a clear priority order.
- In order that actions become more representative in each country, new negotiation and consensus systems must be created which can help to achieve multi-sectoral and multi-institutional agreements.
- The presence of risk management organizations and/or organizations for the prevention and management of emergencies is still weak.
- There is still little commitment to make risk management become a transversal axis.
- In most countries there are no sectoral and territorial plans that include risk management.
- There is clear need to redirect national and sectoral plans and programs, and also it is important to formulate a risk management proposal.
- There are no laws facilitating or regulating risk management and every one acts according to their own initiative and institutional responsibility.
- There are no national funds allocated to risk management and it is necessary to create them in the different regions and countries.
- There is much bureaucratic blockage and excessive centralization. It is essential to correct and facilitate effective and expeditious mechanisms.
- There are no inventories and databases on human resources per sector and institutions.

B.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthening the institutionalism of risk management through public policies that also reinforce regional integration.
- Put into practice and disseminate regional agreements.
- Establish systems to achieve a national consensus for risk management that are participatory, multi-sectoral and multi-institutional.
- Reinforce the capacities of risk management systems, promoting coordination and decentralization.
- Reorient the activities of each sector so as to include inter-sectoral work within the context of the Development Plan and risk management.
- Include institutional risk management plans into the national development plan.
- Reinforce the adoption of institutional commitments on risk management, according to the responsibilities of each sector.
- Protect the investment by requiring a risk analysis of the projects.
- Strengthen risk units in all sectors and create them where they are inexistent.
- Establish intervention goals at short, medium and long term.

B.3. GOALS

- To promote the establishment and reinforcement of Risk Management National Systems.
- To encourage regional lines of action allowing the establishment of similar structures, shared protocols, homologated regulations and regional information systems.
- To maintain the transparency in the utilization of resources.
- To constantly update the inventory of national and regional capacities (human resources, general agreements and agreements per sector, national and regional institutional databases, inventory of initiatives, programs and experiences).
- To establish mechanisms for horizontal and inter-regional cooperation (south to south cooperation).
- To reorient international cooperation based on national and regional plans and strategies.

C. LEGAL ASPECT

C.1. CONCLUSIONS

- There is a legal framework supporting the operation of national systems for disaster protection or management that not necessarily includes all the institutions in charge of risk management.
- There have been partial advances in terms of rules and regulations for Risks Management, but their application is very deficient.
- The Risk Management policy is not generalized at the State level.
- The existing legal framework does not educate in the acquisition and contracting of assets and services for handling emergencies.

C.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Revise and harmonize the existing legal framework with the purpose of incorporating the risk management approach, assigning responsibilities and including the different sectors.
- Establishment of a regional set of norms as regards risk management that can harmonize and support institutional coordination and inclusion of the theme.

- Establishment of mechanisms facilitating the implementation of laws.
- Establishment of effective risk management policies at the regional and national level.
- Flexibility (maintaining transparency) of the processes for contracting assets and services and incorporation of external resources into the processes for the management of emergencies and disasters.

C.3. GOALS

- National legal framework improved during the next five-year period.
- Establishment of regional norms.
- Application of the established norms and regulations.
- Application of risk management policies.
- Legal framework revised and adjusted.

D. PROGRAMATIC ASPECT

D.1. CONCLUSION

- An important percentage of financial resources intended for regional programs are diluted in consultancy and other administrative expenses.
- In the different countries there exist programs and projects that have not had proper diffusion.
- Formal and informal educational plans do not reflect the regional reality of risks nor do they orient people toward their reduction within development processes.
- The region presents a growing level of risks that affects all economic activities.
- There exist programs for the sustainable handling of watersheds shared by the countries.
- Absence of regional proposals for rehabilitating and relocating human settlements inhabiting vulnerable areas, directed at the different social groups.
- Lack of coordination between the different regional programs at the sectoral level.
- Poor sustainability of regional programs once the budget ends.

D.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reorient the allocation of financial resources toward the operative part in order for the population to obtain more benefits.
- Promote the diffusion of the different regional activities carried out with regard to this theme.
- Promote the incorporation of risk management considerations into the development of educational plans.
- Develop strategies allowing risks reduction in the productive sectors.
- When dealing with similar themes, ensure the inclusion of risk management and its connection with other similar initiatives.
- Create proposals and strategies for this theme.
- Creating and strengthening communication and inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms in order to avoid duplicating efforts.
- Establish mechanisms allowing the institutionalization of the initiatives and their future durability.

D.3. GOALS

- Create awareness among cooperating entities for resources to be allocated more in accordance with the proposed objectives.
- Establish a coordination strategy between the different risk management regional programs.
- Dispose of an educational plan adapted to the educational programs that include integral risks management.
- Apply risk management strategies in the economic and productions sectors.
- Protect watersheds incorporating integral risks management and have monitoring instruments available.
- Implement proposals allowing the effective reduction of risks in human settlements located in vulnerable areas.
- Dispose of mechanisms allowing the coordination of inter-sectoral projects.
- To dispose of defined criteria for the institutionalization of the programs.

E. FINANCIAL ASPECT

E.1. CONCLUSIONS

- It is necessary to negotiate with governments in order to make available sufficient financing for risk management.
- In some sectors financing is inexistent.
- Inexistence of financial policies or regulations for risk management.
- It is not appealing for donors to invest in actions that have no immediate impact.

E.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- The new investments must include risk management so as not to be increased.
- Creation of a regional fund with fees per country for risk management with an inter-sectoral approach.
- Encourage the participation of the private sector in financing efforts (tax advantages, etc.)
- Set effective sanctions for companies and institutions that harm the environment and generate risks.
- Funds deriving from these sanctions should revert to the regional fund for risk management.
- Establishment of environmental audits for monitoring risk management.
- Negotiation of the foreign debt in exchange for investments in risk reduction.
- Insist on that the budgets for all the projects must include duly identified risk management measures (studies on environmental impact).
- Encourage the establishment of various taxes (a percentage).
- Endorse financial decentralization (financial autonomy and budget allocation for municipalities).

E.3. GOALS

- Give at least 1% of the national budgets to the risk management fund as for Central American states assignments.
- Strengthen CEPREDENAC with adequate and sufficient budget.
- Create a training mechanism for gathering resources deriving from the sanctions imposed on high-risk activities.
- Promote financial decentralization that is contributing substantially to financing risk management.

- Reduce foreign contribution from external cooperation due to a reduction in financial dependency.
- Less budgets to mitigate and respond to the effects caused by natural events.

MATRIX FOR THEMATIC COMPONENT “A”: “SECTORAL PLANS AND STRATEGIES”

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOALS

ASPECT	CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS	GOALS
POLITICAL	There is political evidence of the creation and existence of actions aimed at facilitating the management of risks regionally, but their full application in the national context is not evident.	Incorporating risk management in all the other sectors, whether the production, services or social sectors. Strength Strengthening inter-sectoral inter-sectoral and inter-institutional coordination, both at the national and the regional levels.	Promote the inclusion of the risk management approach.
	Risk reduction is a transversal axis in some sectors and it is considered from the regional perspective, however, its application in the countries of the region is not evident.	Strengthening national bodies in charge of defining national risk management policies.	Incorporate risk management in regional, sectoral and national agendas.
	The application of a territorial planning policy is promoted in some countries; however, the law itself does not guarantee the application of risk management.	Inclusion of the risk management approach in the legal or operations framework, at the local, national and regional levels (watershed management among countries, Trifinio projects, Central American Biological Corridor within the context of the PPP (Puebla Panama Plan) and the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor).	Support plans for territorial planning with a risk management approach that operates in all the countries as the basis for development planning.
	Governments must facilitate the search for financial resources and technical assistance, as well as cooperation for development efforts that include a risk management approach.	Within the context of decentralization, systems for the fair distribution of resources should be designed so that local governments that have fewer resources can incorporate risk management into their development processes.	Assure that regional and national counterparts on risk management are strengthened and working in a coordinated manner.
INSTITUTIONAL	There is still little commitment to make risk management become a transversal axis.	Institutionalization of risk management according to priority, with a clear order of importance, through public policies that are created in accordance with the responsibilities of each sector and that reinforce regional integration at the same time.	Establishment and reinforcement of National Risk Management Systems
	There is clear need to redirect national and sectoral plans and programs, and also it is important to formulate a risk management proposal.	Reorient the activities of each sector so as to organize and coordinate inter-sectoral work within the framework of a Development and Risk Management Plan, setting intervention goals at short, medium and long term.	Encourage regional lines of action allowing the establishment of similar structures, shared protocols, homologated regulations and regional information systems.
	There are no inventories and databases on human resources per sector and institution.	Protecting investment by requiring a risk analysis of projects.	Constant updating of an inventory of national and regional capacities (human resources, general agreements and agreements per sector, national and regional institutional databases, inventory of initiatives, programs and experiences).

		Strengthening risk units in all the sectors and creating them where needed.	Establishing mechanisms for horizontal and intraregional cooperation (South to South Cooperation) Reorienting international cooperation based on national and regional plans and strategies.
LEGAL	Partial progress in the establishment of Risk Management norms, but a quite deficient application thereof.	Revise and harmonize the existing legal framework, with the purpose of including the risk management approach, allocating responsibilities and organizing the different sectors, and revision of mechanisms to facilitate its implementation.	A revised, adjusted and improved legal framework for the next five-year period.
	There is a legal framework that supports the functioning of national systems for disasters protection and management that do not necessarily include all the institutions in charge of managing risks.	Establishing a regional normativity in terms of risk management that can harmonize and support the organization of institutions regarding this theme.	Application of risk management norms, regulations and policies.
	The existing legal framework has not been adapted and does not provide for the acquisition and contracting of goods and services in the management of emergencies.	Flexibilization (in keeping with transparency standards) of the processes for acquiring and contracting goods and services and the incorporation of external resources into processes for the handling and management of emergencies and disasters.	An established regional normativity.
PROGRAMATIC	An important percentage of financial resources destined for regional programs and projects are diluted in consultancy and other administrative expenses.	Reorienting the allocation of financial resources toward the operating aspect.	Creating awareness among cooperation organizations about allocating resources based on the objectives proposed.
	Formal and informal educational plans do not reflect the regional situation regarding risks nor do they orient toward their reduction within the framework of development processes.	Promoting the inclusion of risk management considerations in the development and preparation of study plans.	Having a study program adapted to the study programs that include the integral risks management.
	The region presents a growing risk level that affects all economic activities.	Develop strategies allowing risks reduction in the productive sectors.	Applying risk management strategies in the economic and production sectors.
	Lack of regional proposals for the rehabilitation and relocation of human settlements in vulnerable areas, which are oriented toward the different social strata.	Making regional proposals and strategies on this theme.	Implementing a proposal that can ensure an effective risk reduction in human settlements located in vulnerable areas.
	Lack of coordination between different regional programs at the sectoral level.	Creating and strengthening inter-sectoral and regional communication and coordination mechanisms so as to avoid duplicating efforts.	Establishing a coordination strategy between the different inter-sectoral projects and regional risk management programs.
	There are programs for the sustainable management of hydrographic watersheds shared by different countries.	Ensuring the inclusion of risk management and associating it with other similar initiatives and themes.	As to the protection of hydrographic watersheds, inclusion of the integral risk management and instruments for monitoring them.

	Poor sustainability of regional programs once the budget has been spent.	Establishing mechanisms allowing the institutionalization of initiatives and their future sustainability.	Disposing of defined criteria for the institutionalization of programs.
FINANCIAL	Governments do not provide sufficient funds for risks management, and in some sectors funds are simply not available.	Creation of a regional fund, with installment payments per country, for risks management with an inter-sectoral approach. Establishment of various taxes (a percentage).	Give at least 1% of the national budgets to the risk management fund as for Central American states assignments.
	Inexistence of policies or financial norms for risk management.	Establishment of effective penalties for companies and institutions that make an attempt against the environment and generate risks. The funds resulting from these penalties would go to the regional risk management fund.	Create a training mechanism for gathering resources deriving from the sanctions imposed on high-risk activities.
		Endorse financial decentralization (financial autonomy and budget allocation for municipalities).	Promote financial decentralization that is contributing substantially to financing risk management.
		Establishing environmental audits for monitoring risk management.	A more reduced budget is required to mitigate and respond to the effects caused by natural events.
	Donors do not like investing in actions that have no immediate impact.		Reduction of external contributions from foreign cooperation in order to reduce economic dependency.

Annex B-2:

THEMATIC SESSION “B”: INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING FOR EMERGENCIES MANAGEMENT AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

FINAL RAPPATEUR’S REPORT

SPEAKERS:

Guatemala:	Aldo López Figueroa, Ministry of the Interior
El Salvador:	Raúl Murillo, National Emergency Committee (COEN)
Honduras:	Diego Gutiérrez, Permanent Commission of Contingencies COPECO
Nicaragua:	Leut. Col. Samuel Pérez, Civil Defense
Costa Rica:	Mónica Jara, the National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Response (CNE).
Panama:	Rafael Bonilla C., National Civil Protection System (SINAPROC).
Facilitator:	Martha Álvarez – CARE International of Nicaragua
Rappateur:	Orlando Tejada – European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office ECHO-CEPREDENAC Project

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. POLITICAL ASPECT

I.1. CONCLUSIONS

- There is an absence of clear policies to orient the functions of institutions in the area of emergency management
- Likewise, there is little political support to the technical component that could translate into concrete actions, such as the allocation of resources and the approval of procedures.
- The theme of Risk Management is not very popular with/or appealing to the competent authorities.

I.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Emergencies management must be included in political discussion forums as a transversal axis in development planning.
- Creating a strategy linking risk management to poverty reduction.
- CEPREDENAC must have a bearing on the development of State policies and must assume a more proactive role in this subject, for which it must have the support of the countries.
- Risk management must be included in political discussion forums as a transversal axis in development planning.

I.3. GOALS

- Include emergency management in political discussion forums as an integral part of risks management and a central point in development planning.

II. INSTITUTIONAL ASPECT

II.1. CONCLUSIONS

- There is need for a diagnosis of the current conditions and capacities, so as to reorient inter-institutional efforts.
- Countries have tools to improve their response capacity in the areas of logistics, search and rescue, COEs, emergency and contingency plans, chancellery manuals, among others.
- The accumulation of means is not tantamount to progress, that is to say, the existence of technologies and infrastructure in a system are not sufficient if there is no local effort to build Risk Management capacities.
- There has been an improvement in disasters management, but a more integrating vision incorporating response mechanisms to handle Risk Management linked to sustainable development is required.

II.2. RECOMMENDATION

- Allow a greater participation of the civil society, the private sector and governmental institutions.
- Strengthen national systems beyond their operation as emergency offices in order to further a comprehensive approach of the risk management theme.
- National organizations for emergencies prevention, mitigation and management must strengthen the institutions that play a role and not replace them.
- Risk Management must be institutionalized as an inclusive process in the handling of emergencies, where the regional, national, local and community spheres can be fully reflected.
- The legal and regulatory aspects of established institutional processes must be complied with at all levels.
- Every institution in the region that coordinates must cease playing a leading role.

II.3. GOALS

- Institutionalization of Risk Management as a process that includes emergencies management and where the regional, national, local and community strata are fully reflected and represented.
- Response mechanisms included as an integral part of Risk Management linked to sustainable development.

III. LEGAL ASPECT

III.1. CONCLUSIONS

- There exist important gaps in the current legal framework which limit the proper operation of national organizations and the evolution toward the constitution of a national system for emergencies and risks management.

III.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consistent and coherent updating of the legal framework is required so as to link it to similar legislations, such as forest, health, environmental, defense, among others, with the purpose of preventing contradictions and omissions.

- Countries that already have an updated legislation need to increase diffusion at all levels in order to facilitate its application.
- In both cases, a diagnosis including the institutional operation of the System and the legal framework is recommended.

III.3.GOALS

- National Systems with revised and updated legal frameworks.

IV. PROGRAMATIC ASPECT

IV.1. CONCLUSIONS

- It is not sufficient for the governing institution to be strengthened if this process does not strengthen the rest of the institutions of the system at all State levels.
- The programs and projects do not include aspects such as follow-up, continuity and evaluation of results.
- Country offices for emergencies prevention, mitigation and management follow the same pattern of offering assistance and lose sight of their true function, which is to act as a coordinating body.

IV.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is necessary to promote and support the regional and local counterparts (committees for emergencies prevention, mitigation and management) so that territorial capacity may be increased through the decentralization of the decision making process
- Training processes need to be standardized and lessons learned compiled.
- The transfer of experiences and technologies between countries must be rendered easy and the role of CEPREDENAC as a facilitator in this process needs to be enhanced.
- Donors need to be guided so that their contribution may correspond to the needs of the country.
- The capacity to manage projects with a regional scope must be enhanced and the theme must be handled with a more integrating approach so as to solve common problems.
- Local strengthening must be a priority in the region, paying special attention to the development of community capacities.
- Projects sponsored by donors must take into account sustainability and the projects that have been proposed, and they must generate sustainable processes with regard to risk management.
- Through highly participatory processes, it is possible to assure that the more vulnerable populations and among those, give priority to the most exposed communities (to which risk management resources and programs should be channeled), could have the opportunity to exercise their fundamental rights in order to further social evolution processes.

IV.3. GOALS

- CEPREDENAC as a facilitator in this process, promoting coordination and the transfer of knowledge, experiences and technologies among countries.

V. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

V.1. CONCLUSIONS

- Insufficient resources and the existence of legal mechanisms that make it difficult to have quick access to the funds. (Aimed at prevention and mitigation actions, legal framework and terminology).
- Response organizations see their actions limited due to poor access to resources.

V.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Municipalities must include funds for emergency management in their budget items.
- Countries must ensure verification and control mechanisms so as to guarantee transparency and the rendering of accounts in the management of resources.

V.3. GOALS

- Creation of verification and control mechanisms
- Inclusion of funds for emergency management in the municipalities' budget items.

PLAN OF THEMATIC COMPONENT “B”: INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING FOR EMERGENCIES MANAGEMENT

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOALS

ASPECT	CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS	GOALS
POLITICAL	Absence of clear policies that can orient the functions of institutions in emergency management.	Inclusion of the emergencies management theme in political discussion forums as a central point in development planning.	Include emergency management in political discussion forums as an integral part of risks management and a central point in development planning.
	Little political support to the technical component that can translate into concrete actions, such as the allocation of resources and the approval of procedures.	A more proactive role by CEPREDENAC as an organization that can have a bearing on State policies and for this, it must have the support of the countries.	
		Creation of a strategy that associates risk management with the theme of poverty reduction.	
INSTITUTIONAL	A diagnosis of the present conditions and capacities must be made, with a view to reorienting inter-institutional efforts.	Opening spaces for participation by the civil society, the private sector and Government institutions. National emergency prevention, mitigation and management entities must strengthen the institutions that play a part and not replace them. All the legal and regulatory aspects of established institutional processes must be complied with at all levels. Every entity that has a coordinating role in the region must stop playing a leading part.	Institutionalization of Risk Management as a process that includes emergencies management and where the regional, national, local and community strata are fully reflected and represented.
	There has been an improvement as regards disaster management, but there is need for an integrating vision that incorporates response mechanisms as part of Risk Management processes linked to sustainable development.	Strengthening National Systems beyond their operation as emergency offices in order to promote and stimulate integrating actions for risk management.	
	Countries have tools to improve their response capacity in the areas of logistics, search and rescue, Emergency Operation Center's emergency plans, contingency plans, chancellery manuals, among others.		
	The creation of local level risk management capacities must be done in conjunction with the accumulation of equipment, technology and infrastructure by the Systems.		
LEGAL	There are important voids in the current legal framework that limit the proper functioning of national entities and the evolution toward the constitution of a national system for emergencies and risks management.	Consistent and coherent updating of the legal framework of national Systems by associating it with other similar legislations, such as the forestry, health, environmental and defense laws, among others, so as to avoid contradictions and omissions. For each case, it is recommended to first prepare a diagnosis including the institutional operation of the System and of the legal framework.	National Systems with revised and updated legal frameworks.

PROGRAMATIC	Institutional strengthening must be a process that includes the governing institution and the rest of the institutions that are part it, at all Government levels.	Promotion, strengthening and support of national, regional and local entities (committees for emergencies prevention, mitigation and management), so that the territorial capacity may be increased through the decentralization of the decision making process.	CEPREDENAC as a facilitator in this process, promoting coordination and the transfer of knowledge, experiences and technologies among countries.
	The Systems/National Directorates for emergencies prevention, mitigation and management follow an assistentialist model in the operating field, losing sight of their true function as coordinating entities.	Strengthening local institutions must be a priority in the region, paying special attention to the development of community capacities.	
	Programs and projects do not include follow-up, continuity and result assessment aspects.	Projects must take into consideration sustainability and the risk management approach. The capacity to manage regional projects that aim at solving common problems must be strengthened.	
	Training processes have been developed in a disorganized manner; they do not follow a coordinated plan and are oriented toward short-term trends.	Standardization of training processes and of those relating to the compilation of lessons learned.	
FINANCIAL	Lack of resources and existence of legal mechanisms that prevent people from gaining quick access to funds (aimed at prevention and mitigation actions, legal framework, terminology).	Ensuring verification and control mechanisms that can guarantee transparency and the rendering of accounts in the management of resources.	Creation of verification and control mechanisms.
	Response institutions see their actions limited due to lacking or limited resources.	Municipalities must include funds for emergencies management in their budget items.	Inclusion of funds for emergencies management in the municipalities' budget items.

Annex B-3:

THEMATIC SESSION “C”: STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR RISK MANAGEMENT

FINAL RAPPATEUR’S REPORT

SPEAKERS:

Guatemala:	Salvador Casado, CARE International
El Salvador:	Ernesto Durán, Head of the consultancy and promotion unit for Risk Management - National Service for Territorial Studies (SNET)
Honduras:	Claudia Cárcamo, (ASONOG)
Nicaragua:	José Luis Perez, Ministry of Health (MINSa)
Costa Rica:	Douglas Salgado, National Commission for the Prevention of Risks and the Management of Emergencies (CNE)
Panama:	Guillermo Arana, Ministry of Health
Facilitator:	Sándra Zúñiga – ES-SINAPRED-COSUDE-UNPD Project Consultant
Rappateur:	Noel Barillas - UNDP-EI Salvador

According to the Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Vulnerabilities and Disasters in Central America, the participating countries presented, according to the thematic components and the political, institutional, pragmatic, legal and financial aspects thereof, their respective summaries.

We would like to stress that in the different reports, when referring to the theme of local capacities, they focused on indicating the active and passive actions of municipalities first, followed by other organizations and institutions that have developed training programs, projects or events with regard to: response, emergencies, psychosocial attention, local level risk management, early warning systems, health and education.

Another aspect of a socio-institutional nature that is present in the countries is the high level of participation of organizations at the base that are integrated into committees in the area of risk prevention, in the area of mitigation, and especially in the area of disaster management.

Below you will find a brief summary which follows the same order of the aspects indicated for the Strategic Framework.

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOALS

I. POLITICAL ASPECTS

In the countries’ reports a higher precision and progress is noted in the formulation of National Plans for Risk Management, Contingency Plans, Reconstruction Master Plans or National Prevention, Mitigation and Reconstruction Systems, which truly shows the will to stress a common need. These same reports indicate that in spite of the advances and progress made, their operation is still not a continuous and permanent process systematically integrating all government institutions and linking or connecting with other more vulnerable social sectors. And, in general, they lack adequate budgets.

In terms of tendencies, various sectors and public and private institutions have put forward proposals seeking the inclusion of Risk Management in the formulation of development policies. They have also indicated that sustainable actions must be planned and that we must tend toward a Risk Management culture.

For the countries of the region, the proposals for Territorial Planning represent a clear progress in terms of national policies, which in some cases are in the same category as laws. It would be only necessary, as indicated, to include risk management as a strategic point in these processes.

One of the countries recommends the creation of directorates, departments or Risk Management units at the different government institutions, with qualified personnel, in order to integrate a common strategy at the national level.

II. INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

One aspect that must be highlighted in the reports with regard to the institutions or systems (which have had a coordination role in response, prevention and mitigation activities, especially in the last five years), is that such counterparts have been strengthened and empowered, and in other countries have been especially created within a legal framework (laws, decrees). However, as evidenced in the reports, they are still incipient and in the process of being included in an integrated and global development vision for these countries.

The municipalities and the organizations of the civil society acting as coordinating and integrating bodies of the Emergency Committees have demonstrated to be qualified locally for response processes, and especially to strengthen and consolidate community efforts. Although educational processes have not been strongly linked to National Programs, the need to continuously reinforce those local capacities is generalized.

In many cases, the main obstacles in the implementation of policies for the reduction of vulnerability and risks at a local level have been inter-institutional coordination problems at the central levels.

Another aspect that has been constantly indicated is the need to incorporate the reduction of vulnerability and risk into Municipal Development Plans created in a participatory manner; but the fact remains that municipalities themselves must establish budget lines for ensuring proper follow up of same. Likewise, two countries have recommended the development of technical, financial and administrative capacities at all levels, with an emphasis on municipalities, and in zones where association processes or processes for the training of communities or commonwealths and micro-regions are being carried out.

III. LEGAL ASPECTS

As to the formulation and approval of laws and decrees, there is an important production of laws and decrees in Central America, which run from national emergency laws to specific laws in the areas of health, education, agriculture, environment, toxic material, water, energy and roads. Particularly, those that have been capable of creating institutions, processes and/or systems stand out.

The majority of the countries coincided in that the processes and institutions that look toward Risks Reduction must have a clear and complete Legal Framework that can allow them to consolidate institutionalism.

With the purpose of having processes that ensure technical, institutional, financial and social sustainability, the need to have appropriate and convenient laws was stressed, but these laws must be applicable and not just on paper.

IV. PROGRAMATIC ASPECTS

One of the work areas that have been most frequently indicated by all the countries is the training of human capital by means of National Disasters Education Plans, as well as university specializations, training programs for those who make decisions at the institutional level and for basic operators as well. In this regard, the most recurrent themes were: Risk reduction, measures for the prevention and strengthening of community organizations, early warning systems, housing, health, food security, etc.

One of the participating countries suggested the creation of a National System for Risk Prevention, Mitigation and Reduction using already existing international treaties on the matter as well as the United Nations' global Millennium Objectives.

Another one of the projects of a regional nature which was considered was the proposal to design and build an Evaluation and Follow up System for the Strategic Framework so as to assess achievements and progress, but with a YEARLY frequency so as not to have to wait every five years to review what has been done.

Another project was to work with a multi-threat approach and apply to the region an international strategy for the reduction of common disasters.

The use of geographical information systems must be regulated as well as the unification of symbols for common use by all the countries in the region.

V. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

Although there were no specific reports on consolidated data for the financial resources invested per theme or per aspect, all the reports evidenced the limitations found before, during and after the occurrence of disasters. We must add that some countries indicated that there was an urgent need to develop economic and financial capacities inherent to each country and to broaden the production capacity for their future accession to free trade agreements.

It is foreseen that International Cooperation organization will contribute to the generation of a comprehensive development policy as a factor that can contribute to reduce risk and vulnerability, but the dependency on foreign cooperation should decrease, even though it has been the principal support in the execution of national reconstruction actions.

Thus, the creation of a National Accumulative Prevention Fund for actions in case of disaster was proposed.

DECEMBER 10, 2003.

REMARKS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS CONTRIBUTED BY THE PARTICIPANTS (THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY) AS A BRAINSTORMING SESSION AFTER THE READING OF THE REPORT ISSUED THE PREVIOUS DAY

- 1) The information put forward by the different countries on the reduction of vulnerabilities and risks and the legal framework should be shared internally and then regionally.
- 2) The Socio-environmental impact on the population caused by different phenomena must offer guidelines for conducting an analysis on Free Trade Treaties.
- 3) The specific research that is being carried out in the region needs to be considered for the creation of policies.
- 4) The technology of GISs or Geographic Information Systems must be directed at a qualitative and interpretative production. It must not be only expressed in quantitative terms, but must allow easy access to all the interest parties.
- 5) It is fundamental to make continuous diagnoses for the construction of a Local Base Line as an element of response, with indicators allowing permanent monitoring and follow up.
- 6) The information and communication technology that is produced must be able to reach local levels for the development of planning and management processes. Likewise, community information must also be produced so that communities are not simple receptors.
- 7) The countries of the area will need to assume more and more economic commitments in order to handle the Response; both the central government and the local governments must focus on the creation of Response Funds.
- 8) It has been proposed to highlight and disseminate among countries, the successful experiences of some sectors, for example, experiences with regard to water and health issues.
- 9) CEPREDENAC must take into account successful experiences in the region and assume commitments in order to coordinate and promote these regional plans.
- 10) The levels of poverty in the region force us to turn to the same communities, acknowledging and reinforcing local capacities in order to stimulate processes to improve their quality of life.
- 11) Greater joint efforts are required to evaluate key conceptual aspects relating to risk management at different levels.
- 12) We must share the existing methodologies and take advantage of the documents produced in each country. One example is the municipal associativity experience.
- 13) An excessive role is frequently attributed to municipal responsibilities, which limits their response capacity. However, if municipalities had the adequate capacities, resources and an order of priorities, they would probably function more efficiently.
- 14) We need to have a permanent training and induction program for municipalities, especially as regards Risk Management, due especially to the alternation of governments.

- 15)** The current state of political, legal and financial aspects is different in each country. It is important to set short, medium and long-term goals for Risk Management in Central America.
- 16)** Often the women and children population is not taken into account, which is why they must be always included in development plans.
- 17)** Local Development efforts must try to join or be in agreement with national and regional development policies.
- 18)** The Risk Management approach must be considered from a political point of view in order for it to have a greater impact and use.
- 19)** In terms of concepts, we must continue to establish and insist on the differences between, for example, Local Development and Risk Management, in order to contribute to the assignment of responsibilities, primarily in Local Governments.
- 20)** It is important for us to Do Better what we Have Been Doing thus far, for example: we must continue to be efficient in the use of resources, the information on communities which has a bearing on the allocation of financial resources itself, and the harmonization of national policies and local policies.
- 21)** We must reduce intermediation with regard to international cooperation resources in order that they may reach the communities, and we must optimize and enhance them.
- 22)** Strategic alliances between local actors must be promoted, and social audits must be encouraged.
- 23)** In order to prevent National Reports and the Strategic Framework from lacking coordination in the region, it has been recommended to have CEPREDENAC monitor and support these processes, setting regional priorities and facilitating the respective audits and inspections.

PLAN OF THEMATIC COMPONENT “C”: STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR RISK MANAGEMENT

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOALS

ASPECT	CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS	GOALS
POLITICAL	With regard to the applied research that is being carried out in the region, it is necessary to review it in order to draft policies.	Creation of projects ensuring technical, institutional, financial and social sustainability.	Incorporating risk management in the formulation of development policies and the national agenda.
	More accurateness and progress in the formulation of National Risk Management Plans, Contingency Plans, Reconstruction Master Plans or National Prevention, Mitigation and Reconstruction Systems, although their operativity has not yet established itself as a continuous and permanent process.		
	Some progress has been made in terms of national policies, Territorial Planning proposals, which in some cases have acquired the status of Law, but risk management would need to be included as a strategic point in such processes.	Inclusion of risk management as a strategic point in national policies and Territorial Planning proposals.	
INSTITUTIONAL	Institutions and Systems have been strengthened in their roles as coordinators in response, prevention and mitigation activities, especially in the last 5 years, but they are incipient and in the process of being included in an integrating and global development vision of their countries.	Inclusion of vulnerability and risk reduction in Municipal Development Plans prepared in a participatory manner and with budget lines for ensuring their proper follow-up.	The processes and institutions oriented toward risk reduction must have a sufficient and clear Legal Framework that can allow them to consolidate institutionality.
	Highlight and disseminate successful experiences of some sectors among countries, in areas such as water, health, etc.	Plan sustainable actions and tend toward a Risk Management culture.	Design and establish an Evaluation and Follow-up System of the Legal Framework in order to assess achievements and advances, but with a YEARLY frequency.
LEGAL	As to the drafting and approval of laws and decrees, there is a considerable production of these instruments in the Central American region, which run the spectrum from national laws to specific laws in areas such as health, education, agriculture, environment, toxic materials, water, energy and roads. The ones that stand out are those that have been capable of creating institutions, processes and/or systems.	The information produced at the different countries on the theme of vulnerability and risk reduction as well as legal frameworks should be socialized or shared internally and then at the regional level.	Timely and appropriate laws available that can be also implemented and not only remain on paper.
PROGRAMATIC	SIG technology must be oriented toward a qualitative and interpretative production; it must not be only expressed in terms of quantity, but easily accessible to all interested parties.	Work with a multi-threat approach and adopt and implement an international strategy for the reduction of disasters that is common for the entire region.	
	The training of human capital by means of National Plans on Disaster Education, majors at university level, and training programs must be favored, from decision makers at institutions to the operating staff at the base.		

FINANCIAL	The countries of the region must assume more and more financial commitments in order to attend to the response aspect; the central government and the local governments must focus on the creation of a Response Fund.	Creation of a National Preventive Accumulation Fund for actions in the event of disasters.	Having international cooperation agencies contribute to the creation of an integral development policy as a factor that can help to reduce vulnerability and risks.
	The socio-environmental impact on the population that is caused by various phenomena must set analysis standards for Free Trade Agreements.		
	Restrictions are present before, during and after the occurrence of disasters.		

Annex B-4:

THEMATIC SESSION “D”: RESEARCH, INFORMATION AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

FINAL RAPPATEUR’S REPORT

SPEAKERS:

Guatemala:	Luis Urbina, (CONRED) and Germano García, Visión Mundial
El Salvador:	Antonio Arenas, Director of the National Service for Territorial Studies (SNET)
Honduras:	Gonzalo Funes, COPECO
Nicaragua:	Clemente Balmaceda, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MTI)
Costa Rica:	Juan Carlos Fallas, National Commission for Disaster Prevention and Emergencies Management (CNE).
Panama:	Obdulia Guizado, Universidad Tecnológica de Panama (Technological University of Panama)
Facilitator:	Laura Acquaviva – ES-SINAPRED-COSUDE-UNPD Project Coordinator
Rappateur:	Haris Sanahuja – UN-ISDR

The format for presenting the national reports varied. Only Honduras did a detailed analysis by thematic components (political, institutional, pragmatic, legal and financial), per the guidelines proposed for the preparation of the national reports.

The report notes for this first segment of national reports are synthesized and included in the final report of conclusions, recommendations and goals (they appear in a synthesized manner in the annex of this document).

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOALS

The following conclusions, recommendations and goals for the Information and Early Warning Systems’ session are presented according to the five thematic aspects that guided the work done during the Forum sessions. The results are based on the countries’ reports, the contributions made by the panelists, the plenary session and, especially, on the outcomes of the workgroups at the end of the second day of this Forum.

I. POLITICAL ASPECTS

I.1. CONCLUSIONS

- The existence of high-level political agreements is acknowledged, which agreements can be used as a framework for the implementation of policies relating to the generation, transfer and application of information (Resolution on the Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Vulnerability, XX President’s Summit, October 1999 – Guatemala City, and the Resolution on the Promotion of Food Security of the XXII President’s Summit, San Jose, December 2002).

- In some countries the legal framework was updated and mechanisms to help prepare for disasters and risk management were created. The corresponding institutions were also modernized.
- The efforts made by the governments, international cooperation agencies and NGOs significantly increased the amount of research, procedures for the analysis, compilation and processing of information, as well as the number, quality and reliability of early warning systems in the entire region.
- It is evident the absence of mechanisms for the transfer, interpretation and application of information to local levels has been noted.
- It is also noted the absence of strategies for improving communication among those who produce information and between these persons and potential users, particularly those who make decisions.
- The role of the civil society has not been defined nor have the mechanisms to include it in the production of information on risks and the preparation of plans for managing these risks.
- Policies for reinforcing the local capacity to manage information and Early Warning Systems are deficient.
- High vulnerability of Early Warning Systems and information systems due to their dependency on the resources made available by foreign cooperation.
- Lack of means to include the information in the development agenda.

I.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Produce information for public use and for decision making (legible formats for decision makers, usable products).
- Increase the management capacity so as to effectively orient the intervention of bilateral and international cooperation agencies.
- Create a strategy aimed at training social communicators in risk management.
- Strengthen the role of regional counterparts in monitoring and evaluating compliance with objectives in the transfer of information for risk management, setting regional standards for the transfer and management of information. CEPREDENAC appears as a strategic actor.
- Promote national and regional policies to continue reinforcing the capacities created at the local level to compile process and apply information in risks management.
- Further policies for the inclusion and channeling of the information on risks in planning efforts at local levels and in development planning.
- Promote policies that allow us to establish minimum standards for free-access information and mechanisms for exchanges and regionalization.

I.3. GOALS

- Dispose of a regional political strategy for information, research and Early Warning Systems in connection with risk management and disaster reduction.
- Establish policies on minimum standards for free-access information.
- Establish mechanisms for information exchange and its regionalization.
- Foster alliances with governmental entities, Non-governmental entities and the private sector so that information may be adapted locally.
- Establish policies to enhance the participation of the civil society in risk evaluations, the application of information to development plans and in the management of Early Warning Systems.
- Allocate resources that guarantee the sustainability of the mechanisms for producing and transferring information.
- Enhance the capacity to use digital technologies for diffusion, information management and training.

II. INSTITUTIONAL ASPECT

II.1. CONCLUSIONS

- The institutional vision reigns, where sectoral projects and programs are given priority, but often these are not compatible and cannot be used in other sectors.
- Some progress has been noticed in the creation of inter-institutional platforms for the compilation, processing and dissemination of information on threats, vulnerabilities and risks.
- The institutions responsible for Territorial Planning and Environmental issues appear as key areas for the promotion of inter-institutional processes in the management of information for risks reduction. In this regard, CEPREDENAC is viewed as a promoter in these processes.
- There has been an emergence of regional institutions that have the potential of leading the information, research and education processes in the entire region. The Central American Education Secretariat and the Disaster Information Regional Center (CRID) are some examples.
- A substantial increase of the academic offer relating to Risk Management themes has been noticed in the region. However, the impact of these professionals in institutional activities is considered to be weak.

II.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promote inter-institutional arrangements for risk management and disasters reduction in all the countries of the region, based on the lessons learned from some initiatives that work in the region.
- Promote institutions that are capable of centralizing and making the information for risk management at the regional level accessible (support initiatives as the one that the CRID represents.) 3. Consolidate governing entities in the countries of the region in order to: a) monitor the activities in the area of information, research and Early Warning Systems; b) coordinate the information flow; c) supervise the quality of information products; d) monitor the compliance level for plans, policies and agreements at the regional, national and local levels.
- Consolidate and promote the creation of effective coordination mechanisms to avoid duplicating efforts in the production of information and in the results of research projects.
- Promote a better adaptation of research to institutional requirements and needs for risk management.

II.3. GOALS

- Establish and strengthen inter-institutional mechanisms for risk management and disaster reduction in the countries of the region.
- Create and/or strengthen institutions that are capable of centralizing and/or rendering the information for regional risk management accessible.
- Have governing bodies that guarantee proper coordination of policies relating to information, research and Early Warning Systems for risk management in the countries of the region.

III. LEGAL ASPECT

III.1. CONCLUSIONS

- The influence of research and information in the formulation of construction codes and Territorial Planning norms in the countries of the region has been recognized.

- Normative voids have been identified in regard to information themes, especially in the theme of access to information on risk management and disaster reduction as a right of the citizens.
- The duties and responsibilities of the institutions relating to risk management have not been clearly defined in the legal framework.
- The application / implementation of regulations and decrees for existing laws is limited.

III.2.RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promote the creation of legal frameworks that target the homologation of regulations and codes in the use of information and the Early Warning Systems in disaster prevention and mitigation.
- Review the regulatory packages in order to identify opportunities, responsibilities and voids in the research, information and Early Warning Systems area.
- Ensure follow-up on the compliance of the minimum regulations established in presidential agreements.
- Create a legal framework for territorial planning and risk management, based on existing agreements in Central America.
- Establish the profile of the persons in charge of evaluating risks and defining responsibilities, including penalties in case of noncompliance.
- Create and display a code of ethics for the implementation of norms.
- Allocate a budget by law for the preparation of a risk atlas, including mechanisms for rendering accounts.
- Review and update urban construction rules periodically (consider seism, wind, flooding and hillside landslide).
- Assign resources by law for the maintenance of seismic, volcanic and hydro meteorological networks, and for monitoring hillside instability.
- Include, by law, risk evaluation studies for determining the viability of urban and rural projects.

III.3.GOALS

- Enforce 100% of the minimum rules established in presidential agreements.
- Create a legal framework to enforce the existing agreements in Central America.
- Monitor urban construction rules continuously.
- Create a legal framework to regulate the duty and the right to obtain the information relevant to risk management and reduction.

IV. PROGRAMATIC ASPECT

IV.1. CONCLUSIONS

- In general, the threat monitoring capacity in the region has been reinforced. However, there are monitoring networks that are already obsolete.
- Progress has been made in regard to the Early Warning Systems network, but coordination is poor.
- There has been a significant progress in the mapping of risks, vulnerabilities and threats.
- Methodologies for drawing up maps have been important and there is much pressure on International Organizations in this regard, but homologation is still deficient.
- Channels for the diffusion of information to users are deficient.

- The need to insist on the production of risk indicators that can enable monitoring and follow-up has been recognized. The need for indicators as a basis for risk management processes in the region is evident.
- There has been a significant progress in the training of individuals for the management of information, research and the operation and implementation of Early Warning Systems.
- As to the impact of training, the results expected have not yet been obtained. There are no indicators as a tool for evaluating the impact of training processes.
- The importance of information for Management tasks has increased. Information is being constantly produced, but there is no systematicity in procedures.
- There is a strong demand for information on disaster themes, but the demand for information on Risk Management and Development is still poor.
- There is a Central American Disaster Information Network. The CRID exists and its presence is strong in the region.

IV.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Modernize and update equipment and resources that can allow effective monitoring and improvements in the coverage of information and research products for risk management in the region.
- Create Multi-threat Early Warning Systems. Strategic alliances with Universities, Insurance Companies and Donors are suggested in order to improve the current conditions of resources regarding the monitoring and Early Warning Systems theme.
- Regulate cartographic symbology.
- Encourage the participation of the population in creation of a risk cartography, for which recuperating successful experiences in the region is suggested.
- Broaden the coverage of risk cartography at the regional, national and local levels.
- Strengthen municipal departments, land registration offices and engineering offices in the management of information tools that can allow risks reduction.
- Promote strategic alliances with universities, NGOs and the private sector.
- Analyze and adopt methodologies that ensure the impact of training for the management of information and the handling of early Warning systems.
- Promote training processes that lead to action.
- Promote joint research activities between institutions and the countries of the region, for which the creation of alliances is emphasized.

IV.3. GOALS

- Define an information exchange policy at the regional level and increase exchange protocols. Reinforce the CRID's role as a Regional Coordinating Entity for themes on risk reduction and disaster management information.
- Create/ strengthen national and regional Information Centers.
- Set up digital databases and cartography services that are accessible to the community.
- Guarantee the sustainability of training processes. Institutionalize virtual training methodologies regarding risk management themes.
- Create indicators that allow following up on regional risk management processes. CEPREDENAC is viewed as a strategic actor in this regional initiative.
- Adapt information to the national and regional demand. Universities, international organizations and CEPREDENAC appear as strategic actors in the Information Management theme.

V. FINANCIAL ASPECT

V.1. CONCLUSIONS

- The financial sustainability of Early Warning Systems in the region is clearly difficult.
- In relation to the above point, the high dependency of the region on international cooperation for the financing of Early Warning Systems is evident.
- The proliferation of non-coordinated isolated efforts in the production and processing of information often causes duplicity, which in turn increases costs and inefficiency.
- The recuperation of investment costs in the production, processing and dissemination of information for risks management is a major problem for most of the institutions with responsibilities in these areas.

V.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Guarantee the allocation of budget items for information, research and Early Warning Systems within the context of “State Policies” aimed at risk reduction.
- Improve the theme of alliances at the sectoral level in order to guarantee the permanent and sustainable flow of resources for information, research and Early Warning Systems.
- Promote cost-benefit analyses offering empirical evidence about the comparative advantages of investments in the production and dissemination of information and research products for risks management.

V.3. GOALS

- Include in the development plans of each country, the financial sustainability of EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS and of the sources of primary information on threats, vulnerabilities and risks, as a State policy.
- Create methodologies for analyzing costs and benefits arising from the information flow, research and Early Warning Systems, aimed at natural disasters reduction of.
- Enter into and establish strategic agreements and alliances between the public and private sectors that can allow financing the production of applied research products and the financial sustainability of Early Warning Systems.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the last five years, we have seen significant progress in the acknowledgement of the value of research, information and Early Warning Systems as important components in decision making related to risk reduction in the countries of the region. In this regard, we have evolved from managing information in order to handle emergencies to a new approach, i.e. obtaining information for mitigation and prevention efforts, within the context of actions to achieve a sustainable development.

From the discussions and presentations carried out during the two days of the thematic session on Information, Research and Early Warning Systems, we can generally reckon:

“Where do we stand?”

A vision has been consolidated, where the production and management of information must actively contribute to prevention and mitigations efforts, within the broader context of actions aimed at achieving a sustainable development.

In these five years, progress has been made with regard to methodologies, processes, policies and institutions related to risks management. There has also been a greater offer of human resources and training.

Nevertheless, information and research products still do not clearly support decision making for risk management and disaster reduction in the region.

“Where are we headed?”

Therefore, we must go forth in the effective inclusion of information as a pillar and capital for risk management.

We must also acknowledge its value as a resource, as a negotiation factor, and from that stand, improve the possibilities of it being socialized and incorporated into decision making.

The challenge is to advance in the establishment of the protocols, the procedures, the channels, the pertinence, the reliability and the sustainability of information, research and early warning systems for the effective risk reduction in the region. Thus, knowledge continues to be the basis for risk reduction in the region.

PLAN OF THEMATIC COMPONENT “C”: INFORMATION, RESEARCH AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS (EWS)

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOALS

ASPECT	CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS	GOALS
POLITICAL	There exist high-level political agreements that can serve as framework for the implementation of policies in connection with the production, transfer and application of information.	Producing information for public use and for decision-making.	Political strategy at the regional level for Information, Research and Early Warning Systems with regard to risk management and disaster reduction, and for minimum standards on free-access information.
	Absence of mechanisms for transferring, interpreting and applying information to local levels, and of strategies for ensuring communication among those producing information, and from these to all potential users, especially those who make decisions.	Promoting policies allowing the establishment of minimum standards with regard to free-access information and mechanisms for exchanges and regionalization; inclusion in planning programs (local and development planning).	Alliances between governmental entities, nongovernmental entities and the private sector in order to stimulate the adaptation of information at the local level.
	Lack of means to include information in the development agenda.	Strengthening the role of regional bodies (CEPREDENAC appears as a strategic actor in this regard) in monitoring and evaluating compliance with objectives in connection with the transfer of information for risks management; regional standards need to be set.	Strengthen capacities for the use of digital technologies for the diffusion and processing of information and for training, and allocate resources that can guarantee sustainability.
	Weak policies for strengthening local capacities in the management of information and EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS, and vulnerability of EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS and information systems due to the fact that they depend on the resources supplied by foreign cooperation.	Creating a strategy aimed at training social communicators on risk management.	
INSTITUTIONAL	Progress in the constitution of inter-institutional platforms for the compilation, processing and dissemination of information on threats, vulnerabilities and risks.	Consolidation of governing entities in the countries of the region in order to: a) monitor Information, Research and Early Warning Systems activities; b) coordinate the flow of information; c) control the quality of information products; d) Ensure compliance with plans, policies and agreements at the regional, national and local levels.	Disposing of governing bodies that can guarantee proper coordination of Information, Research and Early Warning Systems policies for risk management in the countries of the region.
	Territorial and Environmental Planning are key areas for promoting inter-institutional processes in the management of information for risks reduction. CEPREDENAC is viewed as a promoter of these processes.	Consolidating and promoting the creation of effective coordination mechanisms to avoid duplicating efforts in the production of information and in the results of research projects.	Creating and/or strengthening institutions that are capable of centralizing and making information available for regional risk management.
	Considerable increase in the academic offer of themes relating to Risk Management in the region. However, the impact of these professionals in institutional activities is weak.	Promoting a greater adaptation of research to institutional demands and needs in risk management.	
	Emergence of regional institutions capable of leading Information, Research and training processes in the whole region (example: Education Sec. CA and CRID)		

PROGRAMATIC	The capacity to monitor threats in the region has been reinforced. However, some monitoring networks are already obsolete.	Modernizing and updating equipment and resources that allow us to efficiently monitor and improve coverage levels regarding research information and products for Risk Management in the region.	Defining a policy for the exchange of information regionally and optimizing exchange protocols.
	There are important methodologies for the production of maps; international organizations have a bearing on this theme, but homologation is still deficient.	Generating Multi-threat Early Warning Systems. Strategic alliances with universities, insurance companies and donors are recommended in order to improve the current situation of resources with regard to monitoring efforts and Early Warning Systems.	Generating/strengthening national and regional Information Centers. Establishment of digital databanks and cartography departments that are accessible to the community.
	Indicators are required as a basis for risk management processes in the region.	Encouraging the population to participate in the production of risk cartography (taking into account the systematization of successful experiences at the regional level).	Generating indicators that can ensure the proper follow-up of regional risk management processes. CEPREDENAC is viewed as a strategic actor in this regional initiative.
	Significant progress in the training of individuals (Human Resources) for the management of Information, Research and the operation and implementation of Early Warning Systems, but there are no impact indicators of training as a factor for the evaluation of training processes.	Strengthening of municipal departments, land registers, and engineering offices for the management of information tools allowing risk reduction.	Adapting information to the national and regional demand. Universities, international organizations and CEPREDENAC appear as strategic actors in the Information Management theme.
	Strong demand for information on disaster-related themes, but weak demand for information on risk management and on the development and the levels of systematicity in procedures.	Analysis and adoption of methodologies guaranteeing the impact of training in the management of information and Early Warning Systems.	
Alliances for stimulating joint research activities between institutions and the countries of the region.			
LEGAL	There are regulatory voids in the information theme, particularly as regards access to information on risk management and disaster reduction as a right of every citizen.	Legal-regulatory frameworks are required for the homologation of norms and codes in the use of information and Early Warning Systems for disasters' prevention and mitigation. Likewise, revision of the existing frameworks so as to identify opportunities, responsibilities and voids with regard to this theme.	Creating a legal framework in order to enforce the existing agreements at the Central American level; this framework must also regulate the duty and the right to obtain information relevant to risks and disasters management and reduction.
	The duties and responsibilities of institutions connected to risk management are not clearly defined in the legal framework.	Creation of a legal framework with regard to Territorial Planning and risk management based on agreements that already exist at the Central American level; this framework should also indicate the persons in charge of evaluating risks and define responsibilities, including sanctions in case of noncompliance.	Monitoring urban construction rules continuously.
	In some countries, the legal framework has been updated, mechanisms for disaster preparedness and risk management have been created, and institutions have been modernized.		
FINANCIAL	Difficult financial sustainability of Information, Research in the region and an evident dependency on international cooperation for their financing.	Allocation of budget for Information, Research and Early Warning Systems, within the framework of "State policies" aimed at risk reduction.	Inclusion of the financial sustainability of Information, Research and of primary sources of information on threats, vulnerabilities and risks in the development plans of each country having State policy characteristics.
		Improving the theme of alliances.	

	<p>Recuperating investment costs in the production, processing and dissemination of information for risk management is a major problem for most of the institutions that have responsibilities in these areas.</p>		<p>Methodologies for the analysis of costs and benefits resulting from the flow of Information, Research and Early Warning Systems oriented toward the disasters reduction.</p>
	<p>The proliferation of isolated and non-coordinated efforts in the production and processing of information causes the duplication of efforts, combined with an increase in costs and the loss of efficiency.</p>	<p>Promoting cost-benefit analysis that can offer empiric evidence of the comparative advantages of investments in the production and dissemination of research information and products for risk management.</p>	<p>Entering into agreements and establishing strategic alliances between the public and the private sectors that can allow the financing of research products applied to the financial sustainability of Information, Research.</p>

Annex C: METHODOLOGY OF THE FORUM

The methodology was designed to prepare, develop and coordinate two complementary processes: the first process, the national one, whose main activity was to carry out National Forums and to ensure the inter-institutional drafting of the National Reports to be presented at the Regional Forum. The second process consisted in organizing, coordinating and carrying out the regional event in December.

I. PROCESS FOR THE PREPARATION OF NATIONAL REPORTS AND FORUMS

The Central American countries firmly committed to meeting the challenge of initiating national reflection and analysis processes of lessons learned, strong points/assets, advances, limitations and future plans for risk and vulnerability reduction, five years after Hurricane Mitch. This working phase ran from August to November, 2003, leaving such aggregate values as a larger network of national and international contacts, institutional and technical strengthening, as well as substantial achievements, both at the national and the regional levels, for future plans with an updated view of the progress and goals in the risk reduction thematic area.

CEPREDENAC's Executive Secretariat drew up the **base documents** for the promotion, coordination, orientation, organization and development of national and regional processes, namely:

- **Guide for the development of national processes:** this document is addressed to the directors of the local coordinating institutions of the forums in each country, for the promotion and development of national processes (See Annex CD).
- **Functions of the Forum's Different Bodies:** document specifying the responsibilities and scope of action of the forum's different bodies (See Annex CD).

NATIONAL REPORTS

These are documents that contain reflections and national agenda proposals for risks reduction. Its preparation was an important part of the national processes; these are based on the analysis of 4 thematic components of the Strategic Framework that were studied according to 5 aspects that will be listed below; also a proposal for 5 to 10-year goals and the pertinent conclusions and recommendations were prepared. The countries' reports were presented at the Regional Forum and a summary thereof was also elaborated. The complete reports are included in the CD and the summaries in the Annex A of this Report.

To prepare the National Reports, the following guide was proposed:

Guide for the preparation of National Reports

Document addressed to the directors of National Institutions and National Coordinating Entities; it is a guide of the structure proposed for the preparation of the National Reports. The structure of the guide is the following:

- a. Introduction
- b. Purpose of the documents

- c. Thematic components of the Strategic Framework: Sectoral Plans and Strategies; Institutional Strengthening for Risk Management; Information, Research and Early Warning Systems. It was suggested that each thematic component be developed according to the following five aspects:
- Political
 - Institutional
 - Legal
 - Programmatic
 - Financial
- d. Goals (for 5 or 10 years)
- e. Conclusions and Recommendations

NATIONAL FORUMS

These are spaces where priorities for risk reduction and the progress made thus far converge and are agreed on. The National Forums were carried out in the different countries from October to November, and the inputs were the drafts national reports available up to that date. Governmental institutions, the civil society, the private sector, as well as national, international and cooperation entities participated in this Forum.

II. COMMUNICATIONS TEAM AND STRATEGY

On August 14th, 2003, CEPREDENAC's Executive Secretariat officially informed the members of the Board of Directors of the assignment of Leonardo Coca Palacios as coordinator of the formulation, execution and evaluation of an action plan to include the Mitch+5 thematic in the Central American Mass Media Agenda.

THE TEAM OF COMMUNICATIONS, PUBLICITY AND PRESS OF THE REGIONAL FORUM MITCH+5

First of all, the members of CEPREDENAC's Board of Directors were requested to name a national focal point to draft a joint work agenda shared by the six (6) participating countries in the region.

A month later, the Team of Communications, Publicity and Press was constituted as follows:

- Leonardo Coca Palacios, Coordinator
- Carolina Cabrera, COPECO focal point, Honduras
- Sandra Carranza, SNET focal point, El Salvador
- Rebeca Madrigal, CNE focal point, Costa Rica
- Delia Pineda, CONRED focal point, Guatemala
- Juan Rodríguez, SINAPRED focal point, Nicaragua
- Larissa Samaniego, SINAPROC focal point, Panama
- Marco Luque, Web Master CEPREDENAC
- Elga Román Mena, Video Production Team
- Edgard Calderón, Video Production Team

Once the team was settled, the next step consisted of outlining key messages for the media, related to the Mitch+5 review process.

MITCH+5 KEY MESSAGES

A total of twenty (20) messages were outlined with the collaboration of several experts, including: Angeles Arenas, Antonio Arenas, Camilo Cardenas, David Smith and Pablo Torrealba, to mention a few:

1. Risk ignored, is a prospective risk
2. Further alliances reduce risks
3. Prevention is transformation
4. To teach is to prevent
5. Prevention is investment
6. Disaster or Development? Let's decide
7. To prevent is to formulate coherent public policies
8. To coordinate efforts is to reduce risk and vulnerability
9. A good investment entails risk reduction
10. Disasters are not natural
11. Lessons learned from disasters are transformation opportunities
12. Vulnerability Reduction: a set goal for Central America
13. Disasters are indicators of unsustainable development
14. Unsustainable Development = Disasters
15. Disaster = Unsustainable Development
16. To coordinate in order to prevent
17. Disasters bring out development problems: let's transform Central America based on the lessons learned
18. Disasters make evident the pre-existing risks
19. Disasters erode the achievements of development
20. "The Environment takes away those that the society abandons" Serge Halimi, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, September 2003.

These key messages were also used: a) to design posters that were exhibited for two months at the Foreign Affairs Ministries as well as the technical-scientific entities of each CEPREDENAC's member countries; b) to print stickers to be circulated among the journalists, the Central American trend leaders of public opinion and the Regional Forum participants; c) to be included in the articles submitted by some of the members of CEPREDENAC's Board of Directors; d) to design other posters which were shown at the Hotel Clarion during the three days that the Forum lasted.

ANALYSIS ARTICLES

Once the key messages were chosen, seven articles were prepared to be submitted by each one of the members of CEPREDENAC's Board of Directors, in order to be subsequently published by several newspapers within the region. From all seven articles, three were formally selected and enhanced with some suggestions from Camilo Cardenas, Pablo Torrealba, Luis Duran and Peter Gisle; ultimately, the resultant articles were sent to the journalists contacted in each country, for publication.

The titles of the articles are as follows:

- "It is our fault, it is not nature's fault", submitted by Elizabeth Cubias, CEPREDENAC's Board of Directors Representative for El Salvador. The article was published in a daily newspaper in the above-mentioned country.

- “Disaster Reduction: a challenge for Central America”, submitted by Alejandro Maldonado, President of CEPREDENAC’s Board of Directors and Guatemala’s Representative. It was published in two newspapers in Panama.
- “Ignored Risk, prospective risk”, submitted by Geronimo Giusto, Executive Secretary of CEPREDENAC. The article was published in two newspapers in Panama, one in Honduras and in the ISDR magazine.

PRESS REPORTS

Between October 15th and December 12th, 14 articles were published regarding Mitch+5 national processes and the Regional Forum, in several newspapers in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama.

TELEVISION AND RADIO INTERVIEWS

Due to the celebration of the national coordinators meeting in Tegucigalpa on September 9th, Geronimo Giusto and Luis Gomez attended a television interview on a local broadcasting station. Furthermore, Mr. Giusto, went to another radio interview in Omega Radio in Managua.

Later, on the 12th of October, the Coordinator of the Team of Communications, Publicity and Press, participated in a press conference at the SNET office in which the theme? was discussed. The declarations were transmitted by three television networks and four radio stations in El Salvador.

During November, Luis Gomez visited various television channels in Tegucigalpa and conferred several interviews to printed media, relating to the Regional Forum matters as well as disaster prevention. Also, on December 8th, Mr. Gomez and Mr. Maldonado (both members of CEPREDENAC’s Board of Directors) visited some television stations in Tegucigalpa to talk about Mitch+5 related topics.

During the Regional Forum, December 9, 10 and 11, five television reports were broadcasted via national television.

MARKETING MATERIALS

- Triptych and interactive compact disc: to contribute to the publicity efforts, a triptych was designed and finished in CONRED’s printing works. Also, a compact disc was created with the Regional Forum information, and it was distributed to 10 journalists of each Central American country.
- Stickers: 4 different kinds of stickers were printed with distinct key messages, a total of 300 of each. These stickers were distributed before and after the Regional Forum.
- Promotion Materials: promotion articles with the Regional Forum’s logo were designed as give-away items for the participants: a total of 500 plastic pens, 100 steel thermo glasses, 100 mugs, 100 metal key holders, 50 t-shirts, 50 caps and 30 golden colored pens.
- Acrylic Posters: 26 color acrylic posters were designed and printed, with the logo of CEPREDENAC, UNDP, COPECO and Mitch+5 Forum, each one displaying a key message. Furthermore, a bigger one was designed (3 x 15 feet) with the logos of all the organizations and institutions involved in the Regional Forum Mitch+5.
- “Mitch+5 Lessons” documentary video production: The video production was aimed at rescuing the testimonials of previously affected people, and, above all, at compiling the advisory comments of the experts on risk management and humanitarian aid, in the case of an emergency situation, regarding the lessons learned after the Hurricane Mitch catastrophe.

For this purpose, a regional mission was carried out in order to interview people that were harmed, as well as different members of CEPREDENAC's national commissions and international organization's officers, following a list of people to interview made jointly with the CEPREDENAC's General Secretariat and the Regional Forum Coordination Team.

- **Press Notes:** at the end of each day, a press note was written and distributed throughout the region, via Internet. The first one was related to the Opening Ceremony, the second one was about the participation of the Civil Society, and the third one addressed the Closing Ceremony.
- **Video Records:** during the three days of the Regional Forum, a video recorder camera was provided to register the most important activities: the Opening Ceremony, the presentation of the national reports, conferences, rappateur's reports and the Closing Ceremony.
- **Digital Photos Gallery:** approximately 220 pictures were taken during the event and its different activities, and have been classified and archived. Some of these pictures are available in the Photo Gallery.

III. THE MITCH+5 REGIONAL FORUM EVENT

The Regional Forum lasted 3 days and it was held from December 9 to 11. The first day, after the inauguration, a conference by SICA was presented, as were the messages of each one of the Central American countries. Subsequently, on the first and second day, the Simultaneous Thematic Sessions corresponding to each one of the four thematic components of the Strategic Framework took place. At the end of the third day, with 3 conferences and the Plenary Session, the Rappateur's Reports including the conclusions, recommendations and goals of the Regional Forum were presented, and the Tegucigalpa Declaration was approved.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORUM'S PROGRAM

DAYS, 1 AND 2: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9TH AND WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10TH

OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony of the Forum was presided by Mr. Alberto Díaz Lobo, Representative of Honduras' President; Mr. Alejandro Maldonado, President of Protempore and CEPREDENAC; Mr. Luis Gómez, COPECO's National Commissioner; Mr. Gerónimo Giusto, Executive Secretary of CEPREDENAC; and Mrs. Angeles Arenas, UNDP-BCPR-DRU Disaster Reduction Regional Advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean, who gave welcoming speeches and declared the Forum opened (The speeches are in the CD).

MESSAGES FROM THE COUNTRIES

After the opening ceremony, the representatives/heads of the different countries gave their messages in the following order:

- **Costa Rica** – **Luis Diego Morales**, President of the National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Response - Costa Rica (CNE).
- **El Salvador** – **Elizabeth Cubías**, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and El Salvador's representative before CEPREDENAC'S Board of Directors.
- **Guatemala** – **Alejandro Maldonado**, Executive Secretary of the National Disaster Reduction Coordinator (CONRED).

- **Honduras** – **Patricia Bourdeth**, COPECO's (Permanent Commission of Contingencies) technical coordinator for Honduras' national process.
- **Nicaragua** – **Cristóbal Sequeira**, Executive Secretary of the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response of Nicaragua (SINAPRED).
- **Panama** – **Arturo Alvarado**, Director of the National Civil Protection System (SINAPROC).

CONFERENCIA

There followed the conference entitled “*The Transformation and Modernization of Central America in the XXI Century*”, presented by a **SICA** representative, regarding the regional development of Central America and its link with vulnerability and socio-natural risks.

SIMULTANEOUS THEMATIC SESSIONS (STS)

Methodological Development of the Simultaneous Thematic Sessions

On the morning of December 9th, the different countries made their presentations of the National Reports. In the afternoon, panels on the 4 thematic sessions were done simultaneously, with the representatives of international organizations participating in the Forum. After the panels, a plenary session took place in order to present the video “Mitch+5 Forum” and the Civil Society's Risk Management Regional Report (the Report of the Regional Forum for Risk Management in Central America, FRGR - Spanish acronym).

The development of the thematic session was structured according to the 4 thematic components so that they would take place in parallel. At the thematic session the National Reports were presented and the conclusions, recommendations and goals of the Forum were issued amongst the participation of all those present, with a regional perspective.

Male and female Facilitators and Rappateurs were appointed for the thematic sessions, who were assigned to each session according to their experience and knowledge on the component's theme.

The facilitators were in charge of coordinating, conducting, facilitating and streamlining the work done by the participants at the sessions in order to guarantee the extent and success of the results expected. The Rappateurs were in charge of taking notes of the presentations of the national reports, the contributions and exchanges and write the conclusions, recommendations and goals in a Rappateur's Report.

The Rappateurs presented reports on their respective components at the plenary session held on the 11th. There follows information about the Facilitators and Rappateurs of each thematic session:

THEMATIC SESSION “A”: Sectoral Plans and Strategies

FACILITATOR: Adfell Vega – IPADE Nicaragua

RAPPATEUR: Linda Zilbert – UNDP Cuba

THEMATIC SESSION “B”: Institutional Strengthening for Risks Management

FACILITATOR: Martha Álvarez – CARE International of Nicaragua

RAPPATEUR: Orlando Tejada – CEPREDENAC-ECHO

THEMATIC SESSION “C”: Strengthening Local Capacities for Risk Management

FACILITATOR: Sandra Zúñiga – SE-SINAPRED-UNDP Nicaragua-COSUDE

RAPPATEUR: Noel Barillas – UNDP El Salvador

THEMATIC SESSION “D”:	Information, Research and Early Warning Systems
FACILITADORA:	Laura Acquaviva – SE-SINAPRED-UNDP Nicaragua-COSUDE
RAPPATEUR:	Haris Sanahuja – ISDR Geneva

DAY 3: Thursday, December 11th

PLENARY SESSION

At the plenary session the **Rappateur’s Reports** of the thematic sessions were presented, which contain the conclusions, recommendations and global goals prepared by the participants for each thematic component of the Strategic Framework. (The complete version of the Rappateur’s Reports can be found in the CD).

CONFERENCES

During the plenary session three conferences were presented:

- **“The Development of Risks”**, Andrew Maskrey – Team Leader of the Disaster reduction Unit (DRU) of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR).
- **“Analysis of the Economic Impact of Disasters in Central America”**, Marcos Adamson – Expert of the Center for Economic and Environmental Studies in Costa Rica (CIESA, Spanish Acronym).
- **“The Road from Yokohama to Kobe: Toward the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction. Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, 2005”**, Elina Palm – Head of the Regional Office in Latin America and the Caribbean for the Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

CLOSING CEREMONY

The closing ceremony was presided at the principal table by COPECO’s National Commissioner, Mr. Luis Gómez; the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Program in Panama (UNDP-PA) and Coordinator of the Regional Risk Reduction Program, Mrs. Elizabeth Fong; and by Executive Secretary of CEPREDENAC, Mr. Gerónimo Giusto, all of which made the closing statement of the Forum.

Thereafter, CEPREDENAC and COPECO presented Acknowledgement Plaques to the following organizations and institutions that supported the Regional Forum: UNDP, CARE International, ISDR, PAHO, JICA, Southern Command, the People and Government of Taiwan and Mexico, SINAPROC Panama, CNE Costa Rica, SINAPRED Nicaragua, SNET El Salvador, COPECO Honduras, CONRED Guatemala, UNESCO, ITC (International Institute for Geo-Information, Science, and Earth Observation), CABEI, ECHO, “Nuestra Señora Reina de la Paz” Catholic University of Honduras. (See closing speeches in the CD).

Annex D: PROGRAM OF THE REGIONAL FORUM MITCH+5

Hotel Clarión, Tegucigalpa - Honduras.
December 9- 11, 2003

DAY 1: TUESDAY, DEC. 9

8:00-8:30 Registration of participants
8:30-9:00 Opening Act of the Forum
9:00-9:15 Conference: “*The Transformation and Modernization of Central America in the XX Century*” – Rafael Guido of SG-SICA.
9:15-10:15 Messages from the country representatives
10:15-10:25 Presentation of the Forum’s Methodology
10:25-10:40 Coffee break/snacks
10:40-12:45 SIMULTANEOUS THEMATIC SESSIONS (STS)
Thematic Session A: Sectoral Plans and Strategies - (Room: *Madrid*)
Thematic Session B: Institutional Strengthening for Emergencies Management - (Room: *Madrid II*)
Thematic Session C: Strengthening Local Capacities for Risk Management - (Room: *Madrid III*)
Thematic Session D: Information, Research and EWS - (Room: *Madrid IV*)
12:45-2:00 Lunch
2:00-3:30 SIMULTANEOUS THEMATIC SESSIONS continue
3:30-3:45 Break/ Snacks
3:45-5:15 SIMULTANEOUS THEMATIC SESSIONS continue – Panel
5:15-5:30 Presentation of the **Video Mitch+5 Forum**
5:30-5:45 Presentation of the Report from Civil Society’s Regional Risk Management. (The Report of the Regional Forum for Risk Management in Central America, FRGR - Spanish acronym)

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY, DEC. 10

Work continues at the **Simultaneous Thematic Sessions**.

8:00–10:00
First Rappateur’s Report (Work carried out at the previous sessions on Dec. 9)
Interval for contributions and questions about the Rappateur’s Report
10:00 – 10:15 Coffee break/snacks
10:15- 12:45 Work Group. Drafting conclusions, recommendations and goals with a regional perspective
12:45-2:00 Lunch
2:00 – 3:00 The work group continues working at the **Simultaneous Thematic Sessions**.
3:00-3:15 Coffee break/snacks
3:15- 4:30 Partial Plenary Sessions at each STS.
5:30-8:30 Cultural Activity

DAY 3: THURSDAY, DEC. 11

Plenary Session

8:00 – 9:15 CONFERENCES:

1. “*Risk and Development*”, Andrew Maskrey – Team Leader of the Disaster reduction Unit (DRU) of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR).
2. “*Economic Impact of Disasters*”, Marcos Adamson – Expert of the Center for Economic and Environmental Studies in Costa Rica (CIESA, Spanish Acronym).
3. “*The Road from Yokohama to Kobe: Towards the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction. Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, 2005*”, Elina Palm – Regional Office in Latin America and the Caribbean for the Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

9:15-10:30 Main Plenary Session: Presentation of Conclusions, Recommendations and Goals.
10:30-10:45 Coffee break / snacks
11:00-11:45 Closing Addresses (Speech by COPECO, UNDP and the Executive Secretary of CEPREDENAC), and plaques and acknowledgment certificates presentation.
12:00-1:00 Lunch
1:00 Participants start returning home

Annex E: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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