

National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas

*A critical analysis of these processes five years after
the adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action*

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Introduction

During the last two decades, the treatment of what is now identified as disaster risk reduction (DRR) has been the result of a slow transition process and paradigm shift. Initial emphasis on the actual disaster event and response activities (disaster management) has been displaced in favour of an approach where disasters are seen as a manifestation of vulnerabilities, associated with socioeconomic and environmental processes, where natural threats act as detonators for disaster, but not as causal agents, and thus with the focus now being centered on the concept of risk (disaster *risk* management).

Within this paradigm change, concentration has shifted from disasters, natural threats and response, to an approach where risk, vulnerabilities and their reduction constitute the central pillars of the subject. This has been correlative to the reinstatement of roles and of institutional requirements for the effective treatment of the subject at the multi-country level. The notion that disaster risk is a continuum, and that its reduction or increase is fundamentally linked to the ways in which development is planned, also reveals the need to involve multiple institutional parties; thus recognizing the transverse nature of disaster risk. In other words, it is recognized that risk reduction is not a task for an isolated organization or governmental division, but rather one for multiple parties in all sectors.

In the same way, in many countries the existence of a specialized institution linked to the handling of emergencies and response activities has continued to have an important but clearly limited and insufficient role in approaching the challenges implied by disaster risk reduction (DRR). Within this context, the subject of national platforms for disaster risk reduction (NPs) emerges as important mechanisms in prompting actions and policies of DRR in countries throughout the region.

In particular, the importance of developing and strengthening national “*multi-stakeholder*”¹ and multi-sector mechanisms, like national platforms, is being propelled by the adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA), which explicitly details the priorities for development and strengthening of these types of mechanisms in countries across Latin America and the Caribbean. Since the adoption of the HFA, there have been more systematic efforts to expand the network and scope of national platforms in the region.

¹ Refers to the conventional definition for “multi-sectoral groups” included in the model for the National Conservation Strategy (NCS) of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and includes five main groups: (1) the public sector (statutory and governmental entities); (2) the private sector (businesses working to make a profit); (3) NGOs and other civil society members (included among these are community leaders on an individual level); (4) academic and research institutions; and (5) the media.

In the Americas, NPs have evolved from a range of different foundational existing mechanisms such as National Systems for Prevention and Attention to Disasters, Civil Protection Systems, and National Commissions of CEPREDENAC², amongst others. Currently, there are fourteen (14) processes of platforms with different levels of dynamics and operations, and with various degrees of multi-sector and multi-stakeholder structures. Five years after the adoption of the HFA, and now at mid-term, this is an opportune time to take a retrospective look, at how National Platform processes have evolved and to analyze how frequently they are seen in risk reduction agendas in Americas.

Objective of this study

The main objective of this study is the identification and documentation of the advances, obstacles and limitations within the current state of national platform processes for disaster risk reduction in the Americas. On the basis of this general diagnosis, another objective of the study is to generate recommendations and a course of action to guide the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) system in the area of national platforms. This can also provide valuable inputs to the current mid - term review of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

This study is a result of a consultancy commissioned by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), as an active member of the ISDR System, in coordination with the Regional Unit for the Americas (UNISDR Americas), with the purpose of supporting the implementation of the HFA in the region. A second document titled “Reference Framework for the participation of National Societies in the processes of the National Platforms for Disasters Risk Reduction” was also delivered as part of this consultancy.

² *Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de Desastres Naturales en América Central (Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America.).*

I. Methodological considerations

The analysis presented in this document is the result of extensive research from documents about national platforms in the region. This information was accompanied and complemented through interviews with a select group of key, informed contacts in countries visited by the consultant, as well as interviews that took place through teleconferences.

Referred Documents

The majority of the documented information was obtained from the specialized site, HFA-Pedia, which is updated by the UNISDR regional unit for the Americas (UNISDR Americas) from its base in Panama. Complementary information was also obtained from Prevention Web, the site dedicated to risk reduction and maintained by UNISDR, from its headquarters in Geneva.³

Specific searches of sub-regional specialized agencies and national disaster risk management agencies in countries throughout the region were made. Additionally, the UNISDR Panama office offered support through special documentation, which included mission reports and other internal documentation.

Country visits – personal interviews

Four regional country visits were considered as part of the study. The countries were pre-selected by IFRC and UNISDR Americas and discussed with the consultant. The final countries selected were: Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Peru and the Dominican Republic. The following criteria considered during the selection process were:

- the possibility of identifying good practices about the national platform process;
- sustainability of the national platform process; and
- the presence of specialized sub-regional agency headquarters and a mechanism example on a sub-national/local level (double purpose visit).

Guatemala and Peru, not only have NPs processes already in place, but they are headquarters for specialized sub-regional agencies for Central America and the Andean Community respectively (CEPREDENAC y CAPRADE⁴). Costa Rica and Colombia were the first two NPs identified in the Americas, and these two have also been used as examples of good practices (plus Colombia provides a good example of local/sub-national mechanisms for risk management). The inclusion of the Dominican Republic allows for Caribbean representation in the study.

³ The HFA-Pedia portal can be visited from the following link: <http://www.eird.org/wikien/index.php>; the Prevention Web portal is accessed through: <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/>.

⁴ Comité Andino de Prevención y Atención de Desastres, CAPRADE (**Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention** and Relief)

Interviews with key interviewees and documentation of the advances achieved in the DRR agenda after the NP formation were conducted when visiting the countries. The interviews with key interviewees were structured based on the following criteria:

- Actual progress of the NP process
- Value-added by continued development of the NP process. What has changed in the post-NP scenario?
- Does a NP Work Plan exist? Does it consider the identification of roles and the delegation of responsibilities between the NP members?
- Is there influence on the development planning of the country as a result of work done by the NP? Examples.
- Main obstacles encountered. How have they been resolved? Which are still pending? What are the primary limitations that continue to affect the NP process?
- What is the level of multi-sector participation from the public sector?
- What is the level of multi-stakeholder participation? Is civil society being well represented? Is the media being represented? Does the private sector participate?
- What are the primary needs that should be considered in order to strengthen the NP process? Which of those can be undertaken by the ISDR system?
- In relation to the question above, what training needs can be identified? (Identify priorities.)
- What is the level of sustainability for the NP process? Is it too tied to motivating “individuals” or does the process have an institutional level appropriation?
- Is there communication between local levels of discussion and NP decision making?
- What would be the best advancements for the DRR agenda that have resulted since the inception, or major strengthening, of the NP process?
- How is the NP work viewed by existing institutional mechanisms on a national level?
- How is the NP work expressed within the specialized sub-regional mechanisms?
- What is the level of contact and exchange with other NPs?

This list was not rigid or exhaustive, and the elements considered in the interviews varied among the key interviewees in question. The eventual need to delve deeper into some of the questions or to cover other aspects based on the interviewees’ responses also became clear. In this sense, the interviews carried out with officials from sub-regional or regional agencies (for example, CEPREDENAC Executive Secretary or CAPRADE President) included other elements contextualized to the sub-regional/regional level.

In the selection of interviewees, there is a need for balance between the level of connection and personal knowledge of the NP process; and the grade of institutional representation

within the process itself⁵. The main objective in conversing with the key interviewee was to obtain a reality check on the subject, favoring a constructive and critically analytical tone, based on the key interviewees' personal experience.

In the context of this consultancy, the study does not place emphasis on specific situations in some of the NPs of the region, but rather as a general analysis of progress and limitations, identifying what is needed in order to strengthen NPs processes, and subsequently adjusting the support of the ISDR system, in particular, the UNISDR Americas and the IFRC.

Interviews took place with all NP Focal Points in the countries selected, and were accompanied by other interviews that allowed the aforementioned objectives to be achieved. The directives of the National Societies (Presidents, Executive Directors and/or Risk Management Directors of National Societies) were also visited in order to contribute to the second main product of this consultancy (Reference Framework for National Societies).

Remote interviews

A smaller group of key interviewees that were in other countries than those visited by the consultant were interviewed via teleconference. This method was particularly used in contacting and obtaining the viewpoint of some colleagues able to analyze the NPs processes from a sub-regional and regional standpoint, owing to their knowledge of how the NPs were developed in different countries, as well as their involvement in sub-regional and regional organizations linked to risk management in the Americas.

In order to make the teleconferences more effective, the participants were sent a brief introduction regarding the objectives of the study and a list of concerns about the topic in question from beforehand. In some cases, the colleagues being interviewed also responded by taking note of the list of questions, and the teleconference was therefore able to expand upon and clarify the points previously noted.

The analysis presented in this document is a combination of information from documents, information collected during interviews, and the personal experience of the consultant, in the hope of creating a critical view of national platform processes in the region. Essentially, this information will be used for internal analysis by the UNISDR, IFRC and ISDR active partners.

⁵ In many cases, the formal responsibility inside the NP does not coincide with a link to ***carrying out the process with a platform***

II. Revisiting the origins of the notion on NPs

The conception of national platforms is in large part linked to the birth of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) in 2000. The first usage of “National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction” relates to the 1999/63 Resolution from the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) calling for all governments to “maintain and strengthen multi-sector National Platforms for the DRR in order to achieve sustainable development goals and objectives, utilizing existing scientific and technical methods”. The ECOSOC Resolution refers to “National Committee” mechanisms formed during the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) developed during the 1990s.

It is worth pointing out that these national committees were fundamentally of a scientific-technical nature, in sync with a strong scientific-technological component that characterized the first half of the IDNDR. Although these committees managed to increase academic interest on the subject of disaster risk reduction, they were not primarily comprised of a strong base of institutional multi-sector mechanisms. It is also important to highlight that these mechanisms were mostly active in developed countries after the IDNDR. With the birth of the ISDR, they became counterparts of the UNISDR in their respective countries.

Pre-Kobe National Platforms

During the ISDR’s first few years of existence, approximately a dozen of the selected national platforms had formal contact within UNISDR, and a large number of them belonged to European countries. At the time, UNISDR had developed a brief internal working document - just a few pages long - that broadly defined the NPs and their roles. At the end of 2002, a need to define its country counterparts with more precision became evident. At this time, the UNISDR began campaigning on the subject by writing to all of the member states, requesting that they identify a national focal point and persuading the countries to develop national platforms for risk reduction.

At the end of 2003, the first version of the Guidelines for National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction⁶ was born in the form of an UNISDR internal document, explaining its foundations, objectives, roles and processes. This first version outlined the foundations for the process, based on the successful model from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for the National Conservation Strategies, employing a multidisciplinary, multi-sector, multi-stakeholder focus. It had governmental leadership – or leadership that

⁶ ***This first version is titled*** “Guiding Principles of National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction” and was significantly longer than the current Guidelines version.

was delegated or sanctioned otherwise by the government– and key involvement from agents of social change, such as the media and civil society.

The main problem in preparing the NPs guidelines was the need to complete a guidance document that could detail the already existing platforms (that had been participating with ISDR from the outset) and enable harmonization and streamlining of present and enriched NP's as national DRR systems. As previously mentioned, the existing mechanisms had mainly come from developed countries, where they operated at different levels and with emphasis on different objectives of national coordination. In some cases, along with the need to promote the risk reduction agenda within the country itself, these platforms had objectives for international promotion, including know-how and country expertise on the subject in question.

Another of the problems linked to the notion of the NPs was its conceptual relation to the National Systems for Disaster Risk Management, a model that had already promoted and been implemented in some countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. This systematic focus on “National Systems” was promoted by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in the region. In Geneva, there were successful discussions between the BCPR⁷ and UNISDR on the subject of differentiation and inclusion of the National Systems *vis a vi* National Platforms. Different views were discussed, but a synthesized version of the Guiding Principles was eventually reached, and was the product of a consensus between both organizations. The following statement was agreed upon: “*A National Platform must be the coordination mechanism to achieve the full integration of DRR policy, planning and development programs, consistent with the implementation of the HFA. The purpose of this shall be to contribute to the establishment and development of a comprehensive national DRR system, as applicable in each country.*”⁸

Another important reference material for the NPs is the thematic document about “Governability for Disaster Risk Reduction” lead by UNDP. This served as a reference in the *Session for Thematic Cluster 1* at the World Conference for Disaster Reduction (WCDR) in Kobe. The document recommended the development of a multi-sector process to strengthen the work alliances between diverse sectors and disciplines as well as between civil society organizations, volunteer groups and the private sector.

⁷ UNDP Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery

⁸ The “Summary for DRR National Platforms Guiding Principles” was presented at the end of 2004 at the last meeting for the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) about DRR.

Post-Kobe National Platforms

After adopting the HFA at the World Conference for Disaster Reduction (WCDR) in Kobe in January 2005, the implementation of the NPs took on a new dimension. A call is made to nations to “*support the creation and the strengthening of integral national mechanisms, such as multi-sector⁹ national platforms*” in order to guarantee the disaster risk reduction is made a national and local priority (Priority Action 1).

In many ways, the concept of National Platforms takes on a new, more definite identity by associating its establishment and ultimate development with the primary task of representing itself as an institutional mechanism that intends to advance the implementation of the HFA on a national level. The link between National Platforms and the implementation of the HFA probably constitutes the main common denominator that can be found in the vast diversity in formats and dynamics of existing NPs.

Throughout 2005, UNISDR contacted the 168 countries that adopted the HFA in Kobe and asked that they identify National Points for HFA Implementation (as was considered in the HFA). During this exchange, the opportunity to encourage the identification and/or the development and establishment of NPs was taken. By the end of 2006, UNISDR had received official communication from 103 Governments designating their National Focal Points for HFA Implementation, and formalizing the existence of 34 NPs throughout the world. As a result of this communication protocol, it was mainly only the National Focal Points for HFA Implementation that were more familiar and perceptive to the relevance of advancing NPs processes.

The implications of the emergence of the “ISDR System” for NPs

In 2005, an important change for ISDR emerged due to the strengthening of the “ISDR System”. It marked a transition from the main mechanisms in the implementation of the ISDR, as was the UN Inter-Agency Task Force for DRR (IATF), to a system structured by “platforms”. The new Global Platform for DRR takes on the role of being the primary political ISDR forum on a global level, and the NPs are seen as “national groundwork” for this system of platforms, where regional mechanisms take on the structure of Regional DRR Platforms.

This system of platforms associated with strengthening the ISDR also reinforces the preconceived notion of identifying national platforms as fundamental pillars on a national

⁹ Multidisciplinary and multi sector perspectives: makes reference to conventional economic sectors and/or ministerial or departmental divisions in the public sector such as agriculture, finance, health, education, etc., as well as institutions and disaster management systems. These vary from country to country.

level; a system in which the main objective revolves around supporting the implementation of the HFA.

With a more clear view of NPs in the implementation of the HFA, considering the strengthened structure of the ISDR, and with eagerness to start generating a group identity for the NPs, the First Global Consultative Meeting for National Platforms was held in October of 2006 at the proposal of the UNISDR. The meeting took place in Pretoria, South Africa, where 14 Governments attended; their main objective to revise the National Platforms Guidelines.

“Emphasis on the identification of good practices in NPs”

As a result of this first consultative meeting, the National Platforms Guidelines were brought up to speed through the contributions of representatives of the NPs in attendance at Pretoria, particularly regarding the new roles of the NPs in the implementation of HFA, as well as their position inside the ISDR system. These are the new elements incorporated in the NPs Guidelines, along with identifying the UNISDR’s roles and the system for the United Nations Resident Coordinators (as part of the ISDR System) in support of these processes.

During the same meeting, the NPs asked that the UNISDR document good practices and lessons learned at the heart of National Platforms. In 2008, the first publication of good practices was drawn up, illustrating the experiences of a select group of NPs, including Costa Rica and Columbia, as examples from the American region. In the second session of the DRR Global Platform, representatives for NPs presented a document with recommendations for the United Nations Secretary General for the United Nations System.

III. National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas

Since the HFA adoption in January, ten countries in the Americas region have officially identified their national platforms (Argentina, Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic and Venezuela). These national platforms can be added to the four platforms already identified prior to the Kobe Conference (Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and the United States), making a total of 14 NPs processes currently underway in the American region.

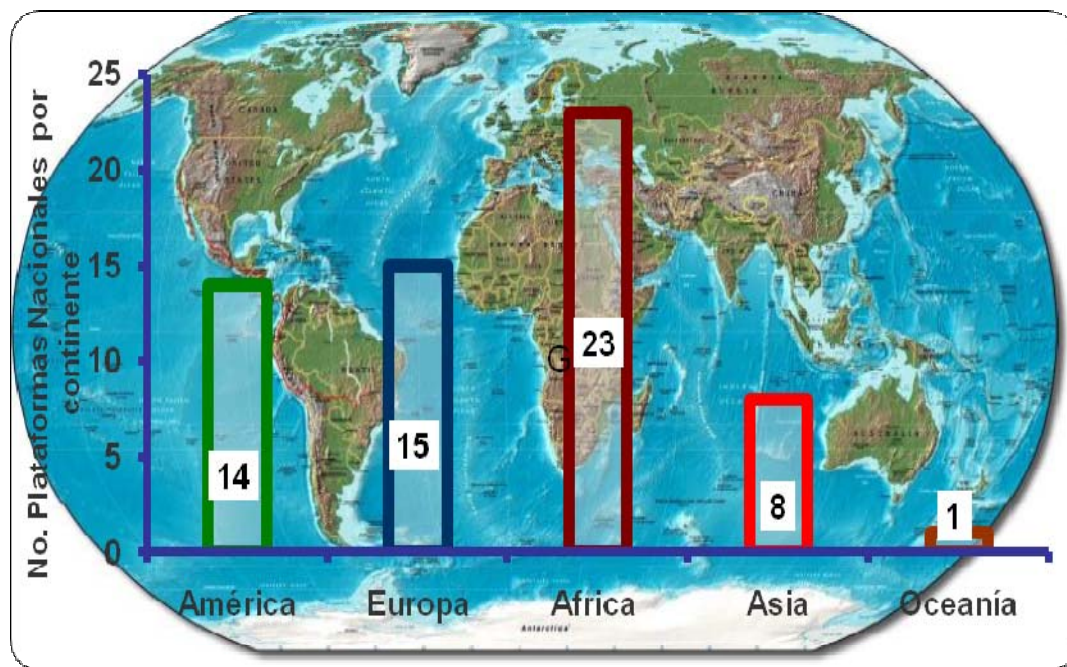
In most cases, the NPs were based on already existing institutional mechanisms similar to the ones integrated in either National Disaster Prevention and Emergency Preparedness Systems, as in the case for Colombia, Costa Rica and Nicaragua), or National Systems of Civil Protection (Mexico and Venezuela). In other cases, NPs based systems were seen as national regulatory frameworks or as part of sub-regional commitments active before the launch of the NPs. This is the case in some CEPREDENAC National Commissions (Panama, El Salvador and Guatemala). In a small group of countries, NP processes are generated from assemblies and institutional arrangements specifically developed for the creation of the NP (Argentina, Bolivia and Peru).

In definite terms, and according to information about NPs found on *Prevention Web*, in the American region there are less NPs than in the African Region (23 NPs) and European regions (15 NPs), but more than in Asia (8 NPs). This is demonstrated in the graph below (see Figure No. 1).

In relative terms, 38% of the countries in the Americas have embarked upon formal communication regarding the existence of their NPs. This leaves a total of 22 countries in the region where these processes have as yet not been initiated or identified. Of the 14 NPs identified, five belong to countries under the CEPREDENAC work path, and one single NP inside the CDEMA¹⁰ sphere of action. In this sense, one can view that the majority of the NPs are in Central American countries and countries in the Andean region, while there is a relatively low representation in Caribbean states (see Figure No. 2).

¹⁰ Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Management Agency, CDEMA, is the current name for what was previously known as *Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency* (CDERA).

Figure 1 – National Platform distribution on per country



Source: based on the information about NPs found on *Prevention Web* (www.preventionweb.net)

Figure 2 – Map- National Platforms in Latin America



It is worth mentioning that the Latin America and Caribbean region has witnessed institutional and legislative development in terms of the field of disaster risk management that is difficult to match in other regions of the world. Not only have exemplary pioneers emerged in the region, in terms of countries developing National Systems for Disaster Prevention and Management, but also in the form of the presence of inter-governmental sub-regional mechanisms such as CEPREDENAC (established in 1988) within the Central American Integrated System (SICA), the Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Management, CAPRADE (created in 2002), as part of the institution linked to the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), and CDEMA (previously CDERA, established in 1991) a specialized entity for countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

It is important to point out that CEPREDENAC, CAPRADE and CDEMA have made significant efforts in terms of harmonizing their institutional framework to include the HFA as an action priority. In that sense, the Americas carried out an intense post-Kobe sub-regional strategy and framework adjustment process in order to adapt and harmonize the premises and priorities that arose from the CMRD in Kobe. This should not be considered a minor detail when it comes time to analyzing the emergence of NP notions in the region, in the context where significant normative and institutional development already surround the subject of disaster management and disaster risk management.

Activities and participation of NPs in the region

Some of the NPs have represented the region at special events on national disaster risk management mechanisms, and have also delineated examples of good practices in publications focused on these types of mechanisms.

As mentioned in the previous section, NP members from Panama and Peru represented Latin America and the Caribbean in the First Consultative Meeting in Pretoria. NPs from Colombia and Costa Rica have been highlighted as examples of good practices in special UNISDR¹¹ publications. At the First DRR Global Platform Session in June 2007, the NP representative from Costa Rica (at the time, also President Pro-Tempore of CEPREDENAC) had the chance to intervene in the comprehensive discussion about the group of NPs that make up the ISRD system.

In October 2008, the first meeting for National Platforms in Latin America and the Caribbean took place in Panama, in an event that brought together focal points for Climate Change from various countries¹². This meeting was attended by NP representatives from Argentina, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Peru, Panama, Dominican Republic and Venezuela, as well as by national Climate Change focal points. The group of

¹¹ Towards National Resilience: Good Practices of National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction. ISDR, 2008.

¹² Regional Meeting of National Platform and Climate Change national focal points. October 2008, Panamá.

NP representatives that gathered in Panama had the chance to reflect upon advances in their NP processes, and share their own experiences about obstacles and challenges they had faced.

The First Regional Platform Session of the Americas, also held in Panama in April 2009, provided a second opportunity for NPs of the region to meet. A special thematic segment was dedicated to discussions around the NPs (refer to Box No. 1).

Box No. 1 First Session for DRR Regional Platforms for the Americas

***Box No. 1. First Session for DRR Regional Platforms for the Americas –
Main points raised at the National Mechanisms Debate***

Definition of a National Platform: Defining the format of a National Platform, and deciding what type of participation is desired and feasible, requires time. The actual establishment itself and the mechanisms and work methods can vary from country to country, but the basic recommendations established in the Outline should be followed.

High Level Government Commitment: Strong governmental leadership is required. The influence National Platforms rely on must come from different levels. Awareness, support and advocacy should consider a leadership focus (from authorities and local networks, civil societies, technical agencies, on a national level).

Relationships with other mechanisms and structures in the country: Most National Platforms are developed from National Emergency Systems, which facilitate their implementation. However, this often makes it difficult to integrate economic and social actors and sectors related to the all aspects of the development arena. Convening actors around a “development” agenda results in the creation of a more inclusive platform. Meetings based on existing mechanisms, generally established for emergency and relief purposes, may lead to the exclusion of relevant development actors.

Establishing National Platforms in priority thematic areas: According to national development agendas, the development of national thematic platforms is considered both practical and relevant. A platform for Early Warning Systems is mentioned as an example.

Role of international financial institutions: Development banks, multilateral cooperation agencies, and donors could further promote the integration of risk management in development agendas at the highest level of government, i.e. prime ministers and presidents.

Source: based on the session feedback and personal notes provided by the session mediator

As a result of discussions that took place in the session with NPs, and at the request of a proposal from Colombia, it was decided that the following meeting should be organized: “Santa Marta Meeting: From Theory to Practice”¹³, scheduled for April 2010. The Santa Marta Meeting’s main objective is to exchange and discuss successful experiences and

¹³ The Santa Maria Meeting was organized and convened by the Office of Disaster Management (DGR) in Columbia, the OAS Department of Sustainable Development (OAS/DSD); and the ISDR regional office for the Americas (UNISDR) (<http://www.eird.org/encuentro-sta-marta/index.html>).

good practices in the area of *Disaster Risk Management and Adaptation to Climatic Change (ACC)* implemented by *National Mechanisms and Networks* with the purpose of advancing, strengthening and constructing National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction under the HFA. The meeting was framed within the context of the process of the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas.

IV. Gaps and limitations

From a general standpoint, national platform processes in the region are generally weak, characterized by significant diversity in terms of institutional formats and arrangements, with limited incidences of effective contribution in trying to advance the disaster risk agenda in tandem with national development processes.

There are many reasons why, initially, there are weaknesses associated with the processes. These include fundamental reasons related to limited institutional leadership in advancing these types of processes to political issues which, affect stall or inhibit NP development and circumstantial aspects detrimental to the sustainability of the processes. These limitations have, in some ways, led to limited focus from national focal points of the process. In moving forward, we must capture the main elements that emerge as possible causes for NPs weaknesses.

- *Very lax foundation concepts / Assessment of final product and not the process*
“The initial support is to clarify what is and what is not a NP. There should be a tentative work agenda proposed (principle topics), so that the country can analyze them. A larger effort should be made to expand—at all levels – the NPs and the HFA dialogue” (interviewee)

NPs Guidelines have been recognized for providing the National Platforms with a conceptual basis, on which the existing pre-Kobe national platforms can build upon. Nevertheless, there was a need to reflect the highly diverse institutional nature of pre-existing platforms, and the widely varied and case specific aspects for development of these multi-sector mechanisms in developing countries. Therefore the challenges of collating the information into one single document, resulted in the production of quite general guidelines. In dealing with concrete contexts of country application, the result was that little precise information on how to guide national platforms processes was produced.¹⁴

The first concrete anchor for the NPs process objectives came with the adoption of the HFA. The NPs found their identity and niche as a national mechanism with specific objectives for coordinating and promoting the HFA implementation in its countries. This is recapped in a brief update of the guideline document that includes HFA coordinates in its contents. In this sense, national NPs started post-Kobe are more specifically associated with the HFA implementation and action priorities, than those defined before 2005.

¹⁴ The first Guidelines version contained a more detailed characterization of the processes that should accompany NPs development (political, participatory, technical and resource mobilization). In the following versions, the contents were synthesized; and a mere reference to these processes, those that should guide NP development, was left.

In fact, the diversity of national formats and existing regulations, especially in the Americas region, both at country and specialized sub-regional mechanism levels, maintained NP guidelines just as a general reference. This is not very practical for guiding processes in countries.

It is also worth noting that the relevant analysis of Guidelines stems from the idea that this document is relatively known by those who led and continue to lead the creation of the NPs and by those who actively participated in their dynamic. Based on the interviews carried out, it is apparent that this assumption is incorrect, and the consultant's general perception is that the NP Guidelines are practically unknown even to the majority of colleagues participating in NPs themselves, as well as to those that lobby in the internal UNISDR system for their development.

A general notion of NP understanding exists, but there are few cases where national counterparts know the document in its entirety. The knowledge of the four processes in which the NPs are based is practically nil (political, participatory, technical and resource mobilization). In some way, this also explains the lack of knowledge about processes associated with the NPs, and the persistence of more knowledge of the final product in the context of the HFA implementation, that controls the ideas of many counterparts that have promoted the subject in the countries.

If NP Guidelines place special emphasis on the idea that thematic national platform themes should be linked to the notion of processes and not to the concept of a final product, the general perception of national counterparts is closer to a final product concept where importance is placed on formalizing the establishment of the national platform as part of country's commitments towards HFA implementation.

■ *National Counterparts with limitations in heading up the process*

"...did not obtain the mobilization of participants that the NP process implies; when the HFA appeared, only the "traditional" participants felt a natural involvement, where in most of the cases involvement was more nominal than reflective and conscious" (interviewee)

One of the associated causes for the limited launch and weak leadership for NPs processes has to do with those who were the initial national counterparts directly called to launch these processes in their countries. As mentioned in earlier sections, the first task for implementing the HFA was taken on by UNISDR, in their call for Governments to identify an HFA National Implementation Point in the country, and by urging countries to identify and/or strengthen NPs. The call was made through national counterparts that the UNISDR already had established. In the case of the Americas, these were, in large part, the agencies and institutions responsible for disaster preparedness and response (National Emergency Commissions, and Protection Systems or Civil Defense, among others). The identification

of HFA Focal Points was almost a revalidation of previous National Focal Points. In other words, there was no national consultation or previous lobbying for identifying Focal Points that had the best institutional competencies for leading the process of HFA implementation in the country.

Box No. 2. About the profile of the national counterparts

“A fundamental challenge in launching disaster risk reduction platforms is the contradiction that the national coordinator for disasters assumes; where a traditional background in civil defense / emergency services / response, may not have the capacity or be in the position to effectively influence disaster risk reduction agendas that, in large part, require influence on national and sector DEVELOPMENT processes and investment topics. Actions to facilitate an effective transition of cultural dividing lines between the development planning community and the response community, requires actions that are not only urgent, but sensitive if HFA goals for 2015 are to be reached”.

Source: excerpt from Sub-regional Report on the Caribbean prepared for the First DRR Regional Platform of the Americas Session, 2009.

This also implied that those same national counterparts that existed before the Kobe Conference were the ones on the receiving end of the call to develop the NPs processes, and also those same persons that the task of drafting and following up of these processes fell on. This means that, in the majority of cases, the institutions with more specific mandates on preparedness and disaster response, have led the NP processes, not only in the role of drafting, but also in the role of guiding, the process. This may be one reason why, in the majority of cases, the lack of multi-sector coordination generally, has been a significant limitation to cross cutting NP advancement.

In the structures of National Emergency Committees and/or Protection Systems or Civil Defense, assigning responsibilities for NP topics often falls back on the individual leadership of these institutions involved. In many cases, the superior authorities of these entities do not have a comprehensive understanding of what happens in the NP processes. In this case, it is common to find that the NP is associated with “individuals” inside these entities are the ones that identify with and commit to the NP topic, but there isn’t necessarily an institutional commitment at the highest level. In the case of changing government, or upon the exit of these persons identified with the NP, the NP process is often abandoned without being followed up. This situation has been seen in many NPs launched in the region. The loss of momentum with which the process was launched and with the aggravation of losing initial expectations from relevant members, makes the task of revitalizing and launching the NP process much more complex.

▪ *Existing regulatory frameworks and sub-regional dynamics: a puzzle to put together*

"In the region we already have many commitments at the country level which imply the development of work commissions, generation of consultancy processes and reports for sub-regional institutions, to which we add the HFA requirements in the context of the international community. Sometimes it is confusing. We spend a lot of time on those harmonization processes and planning, and little time on applying the tools themselves." (interviewee)

As outlined in previous sections, the Latin American and Caribbean region has witnessed important regulatory and legislative developments for disaster management, and more recently, disaster risk management. Adding to the development, on a national level, is the existence of mechanisms and sub-regional institutional solutions with sound commitments from member states. This is the scenario for many countries in the region when the HFA and the call for development of NP processes emerge.

The HFA has been gaining momentum in the region, during the same period as sub-regional entities were being or had recently been designed, or had just finished, important processes of formulating regional strategy and action plans, like the case of the Andean Strategy for Disaster Prevention and Response in the Andean countries (approved in 2004) or the Regional Program for Disaster Reduction in Central American countries (launched in 2006). The harmonization processes of these frameworks and action plans imply an additional effort where countries found themselves within a larger dynamic at a sub-regional level, and a new scenario at the international level, in terms of the adoption of the HFA.

"On the topic of Platforms, the general initial confusion that existed in the countries (and that still exists today) about the apparent duplicity and competency with existing National Systems and this has been counterproductive, and not very strategic."

One of the conceptual and methodological dilemmas for the development of NPs in the region was its apparent duplicity with the existing National Systems for Disaster Prevention and Relief that existed in many countries – largely evolved after the development of the National System in Colombia. If the Guidelines suggest the NPs should be mechanisms that consolidated national systems, the guidelines do not detail how a NP should be developed in a country where a National System already existed. In Colombia, the government decided to identify the entire National System as the Colombian NP. In other cases, such as Bolivia, the NP is an entirely new mechanism that operates within the National System.

This also demonstrates the need for guiding documents for NPs processes that are much more adapted to and contextualized for regional and country conditions. The generalized contents of the current NP Guidelines do not offer a consistent guide in terms of analyzing what steps to take in countries that already have regulatory frameworks and developed institutions, such as is the case with National Systems. In the same way, it is necessary to

adapt the Guidelines to the sub-regional dynamics in those countries affiliated with specialized inter-governmental entities where there are also specific commitments for DRR topics, including strengthening multi-sector mechanisms for the management of disaster risk reduction.

▪ *Awareness of the HFA*

“The majority of the participants that the platforms concepts would like to have involved, starting with base organizations (local), are completely unaware of the HFA. This is the NPs greatest weakness, and it explains the slow advancement in implementing the Framework for Action and National Platforms” (interviewee).

Five years after the HFA was launched at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, more comprehensive efforts in risk management have been made, and there is growing reference to DRR in documentation and policies. At the same time, the people who are actually involved in - on the ground – disaster risk management, are not necessarily aware of the HFA or the NP system.

The HFA is largely recognized by those individuals and participants that, in one way or another, are linked to the international community or to sub-regional institutions that work within the field of DRR, or amongst those that work in the academic sector. As a matter of fact, on a national level and, in particular, concerning institutional personnel linked to development processes, it is perceived that the private sector and organized civil society in general, lack a general knowledge of the HFA. Even in these national environments where the HFA is frequently referred to, it is perceived that many are familiar with the existence of HFA and incorporate it into their rhetoric, but a comprehensive knowledge of its action priorities and the roles assigned for its implementation are distinctly lacking.

In many countries, at the insistence of the NPs, National Forums to integrate the NP agendas into ongoing efforts, have been called for. Although they have been very important, they have had limited reach with regards to the broad scope of the HFA and its implementation at national level. UNISDR undertook an important activity in 2007, with the publication of a guidance note to orient and support in HFA implementation (*Words into Action*) at the national level. However, until recently, the publication was only available English, and therefore had limited applicability in this region. This type of guide is very important in orienting the work of the NP members, through the identification of specific roles, objectives and activities for implementing the HFA in different countries throughout the region.

- *More UNISDR and ISDR system presence needed in Latin America and the Caribbean*
"I feel that the ISDR should have more presence: my impression is that it always works from a "remote control" perspective, and the issues of HFA and NP should be more actively pushed, as this does not deal with something that everyone already knows and defends." (Interviewee)

A recurring issue that arose from the interviews was the lack of a more consistent advocacy efforts from the ISDR System, and of the ISDR Secretariat in particular, which is the most visible advocate of the NP concept. It was felt that generally speaking, UNISDR takes great haste and priority when it comes to the launching or formalization of the NPs, often mediated by written communication, but rarely through personal exchange with the national actors. This sense of urgency appears later diluted once the NP is formalized, and follow up orientation and training, communications, and personal exchanges, are often lacking or sparse, indicating that the process of mentoring the development of the Platform itself is not as highly prioritized, as is its formalization.

Follow-up and support from the United Nations in the countries is also not seen as being prevalent, at least not from the dimension outlined in the NP Guidelines, regarding the role of the Resident Coordinator System. In this regard, contact is generally made through the regional unit of the UNISDR, and with few exceptions, it appears that a comprehensive knowledge of the importance / relevance of the role of the NPs doesn't exist among the United Nations and development organizations working within the countries.

Box No. 3. Role of the ISDR System

Role of the ISDR System

The ISDR System, mainly through the Resident Coordinators and Country UN Team systems, as well as through different individual members of the ISDR system, carry out decisive roles of promoting, catalyzing and facilitating the process to establish or strengthen the DRR National Platforms, under the principles of membership and national leadership.

The ISDR System can also support the development of specific activities such as national reference studies, risk evaluations and national programs or action plans for the implementation of the HFA.

Support from the Resident Coordinators and UN Country Team

The Resident Coordinator represents the UNISDR Secretariat at the country level. Additionally, one of the critical objectives of the UN Country Team, expressed through the CCA/UNDAF, is to strengthen the existing national capacity, in accordance with the principles of membership and national leadership. Both the Resident Coordinator and the UN Country Team can promote and strengthen an efficient national capacity for the DRR, through its support to the creation or strengthening of the DRR National Platforms.

Source: taken from the Guidelines for National DRR Platforms (page 18). UNISDR, 2007

Particularly among counterparts at the national level, a greater understanding of the role of the ISDR System and of the NPs– is required. The notion of NPs is still largely seen as primarily an associated arm of UNISDR and the HFA, holding a more conventional role of

strategic representation rather than as a powerful multi-sector advocacy agent at national levels.

▪ *From the nominal to the functional: the absence of action plans and work protocols*

"...the NP should really concentrate on encompassing national tasks, not a conventional type nomination of a committee or national commission... the NPs are founded in a practical inter - institutional task, and in the same way, have "a sense of ownership". (Interviewee)

Regarding the perception of the NP as a final product and the apparent priority for nominal establishment of the functional process that has guided the launch of a significant number of NPs in the region, it is uncommon to observe the existence of NPs that stem from a concrete work scheme, with an action plan, goals and monitoring and evaluation work goals.

The NPs' have some function as platforms for exchanges of information (often unidirectional, from the focal point of NP). However, work meetings are scarce, and there is a lack of annual plans detailing specific responsibilities, goals, measureable targets and results. To a large extent, many NP agendas are subordinate to meetings related to national calendar activities and events, such as preparation of the National Report for HFA implementation (the HFA-Monitor), organization of activities for the celebration of International Disaster Reduction Day, and preparation for participation in the Regional Platform or Global Platform, amongst others. The most operative meetings, in terms of dynamics and definition of activities, are still linked in large part to the occurrence of emergencies in the countries themselves.

Exceptions arise in those NPs processes that are already established in a highly defined structure and with more developed planning and monitoring mechanisms, such as the ones found in National Disaster Prevention and Management Systems, that existed previous to the identification of NPs. Some good developments are seen a small group of NPs that are highlighted in the forthcoming section.

Positive impacts from NPs in national DRR agendas

"The most positive part of the Platform meetings is that they openly approach the need to involve traditionally marginal actors from the institutional sphere, such as socially based organizations, the private sector, universities, and the church, among others". (Interviewee)

On analyzing the previous section, it becomes evident that many weaknesses exist, and there are many aspects to improve advocacy for, and function of NPs. It is also clear that the NPs have generated a positive impact on many actors who are at the forefront of risk reduction agendas in the region. Moreover, the problems and failures found in some of the NPs do not contradict the fundamental premise that they conceptually seek to demonstrate the relevance for multi-stakeholder and multi-sector participation and the importance of being able to rely on national mechanisms, to launch and guide risk reduction agendas.

One of the common elements that has stood out among the majority of the interviews is the emergence of NP topics at national levels, and how this has facilitated the launch of debates surrounding the need for multi-sector participation on the topic, opening a relevant venue for many of the players linked to disaster risk reduction, to get involved in discussions around the HFA implementation, taking on more of a leading role and a more horizontal relationship with official Government counterparts.

The appearance of a National Platforms proposal in an international context was also a very positive element in reinforcing work programs and projects in support of DRR in the region (such as PREDECAN). This reinforces the idea that risk management is of a multi-sector and multi-institutional nature, and its implication demands active participation from multiple players that don't usually coincide with valid institutional schemes. This support offered as a result of the existence of a country - adopted international framework has been a constant reference and has legitimized and strengthened the work of institutions and programmes that lobby for a more integrated approach, with multi-sector and inter-disciplinary commitments for disaster risk management.

Beyond the limitations mentioned in the previous section, National Platform processes have, in most cases, persuaded countries in the region to reinstate participation of various public sector ministers in discussions around the national DRR agenda. In the same way, they have stimulated lagging mechanisms like the National CEPREDENAC Commissions that, by definition, involved a group of multi-sector commissions as a basis for NP development. In other cases, they have sparked a debate around regulatory frameworks and the membership of institutions linked to the subject; making gaps and limitations evident, and creating concern about the need to revise and update the aforementioned mechanisms.

A closer look at a few NPs processes currently operating, allows us to investigate some of their endeavors more comprehensively, which can subsequently serve as a reference for other NPs processes. Eventually, some of these observations could serve as the basis for formulating good practices. For the sake of this analysis, processes were selected from Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Peru and the Dominican Republic, all with prominent NPs currently in operation, plus the case of Dominican Republic, currently in the process of developing its NP. The contents are based on interviews conducted on site in these countries, completed with the aid of documented material available from official sources (refer to methodological notes at the beginning of this document).

The National System for Disaster Prevention and Response in Colombia (SNPAD) was identified in mid 2004 as the National Platform for DRR in the country, in response to the communication sent by the UNISDR to the national counterparts in the process preceding the Global Conference for Disaster risk Reduction that took place in Kobe, in January 2005.

The SNPAD was created in 1989 by law 46 of 1988, organized by Decree 919 of 1989, and is of a decentralized, inter – institutional and participative character. The system supported the Plan for Disaster Prevention and Response (PNPAD), created by Decree 93 of 1998, and gathers the principle actions for prevention and attention to disasters in the countries under four strategies. Institutionally speaking, the entity that has thematically led SNPAD is the national Director for the Prevention and Management of Disasters (DNPAD), operating under the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior. At the departmental level, they rely on the Regional Committees for Disaster Prevention and Response (CREPAD), and in a complementary manner on CARS – Regional Autonomous Environmental Corporations, at the regional level which, is in charge of overseeing the environment in their jurisdiction. Finally, at the municipal level, they rely on Local Committees for Disaster Prevention and Response (CLOPAD), which are in charge of leading development, implementation and monitoring at the local level.

The ways in which SNPAD can illustrate advances and important references to the rest of the national mechanisms are numerous. As was mentioned in the first section of this document, SNPAD has already been utilized as an example in some UNISDR publications on good practices and lessons learned by the NPs and national mechanisms¹⁵. The element that has been highlighted, in the case of Colombia, is the development of local mechanisms in selected cities throughout the country that have become ‘champions’ in the area (certainly Bogota, Manizales and Medellin).

It is interesting to explore some of the Colombian National Platform’s new initiatives dealing with risk management, together with some institutional aspects regarding SNPAD in the last two years.

Updating the SNPAD

Executive Power is giving renewed strength to the system, organizing all entities at national and territorial levels, and motivating them to meet their risk management obligations. The system had been weakened by successive reforms that had minimized the political presence of the Department for Disaster Prevention and Response (DGPAD) as a coordinating body. Additionally, DGPAD is now known as the *Dirección de Gestión de Riesgo* (Risk Management Department), and this change is associated with a transition

¹⁵ Towards National Resilience, Good Practices on NPs for DRR, UNISDR, 2008.

process toward a more integral approach to risk management, with updated policies and regulations (the DGPAD changed its name to *Dirección de Gestión de Riesgo* at the end of 2009).

Strengthening local risk and disaster management

Despite the important process of administrative, political and fiscal decentralisation, and their advantages in terms of risk management, the advancement of DRR is greatly dependent on the levels of management capacity and the comprehension of roles and competencies of local mechanisms. In this sense, the same report on advances 2007 – 2010 states, “An important limitation that has hindered the effective implementation of risk management in development processes, is the weakness of disaster related technical institutional capacity at municipal and departmental levels.”¹⁶

The project “*Technical Assistance in Local Risk Management at Local and Departmental Level*” is being implemented. Its objective is to promote the implementation of prevention strategies, disaster management and risk reduction in projects of Municipal and Regional Planning and Development, according to the guidelines of PNPAD and the national Development Plan. This project was launched at the end of 2008, and one of its goals is to assist 186 municipalities in 32 districts in capacity development for risk management, and produce municipal risk

management plans developed between local committees, and CLOPAD.

In the framework of this project, the Department for Risk Management has already developed a Municipal Guide for Risk Management to assist the municipalities in the optimization of municipal public policies in risk management. The guide is particularly directed toward the members that make up CLOPAD, and outlines a systematic approach to risk management.

Some reflections about the Colombian case

It is important to put the good practices associated with the Colombian case in context, when they are described within the environment of activating the NPs. In this sense, it is significant to point out that many of the advances associated with the NP in Colombia are directly related to the intrinsic characteristics and achievements associated with the existence of SNPAD. This is an important distinction to make, because these achievements do not necessarily reflect a value added that arises from the identification as a National Platform for DRR. In other words, the launching of the NP was in some ways symbolic, as the government identified the already existing SNPAD as the NP: However the imbuing of the NP aims and processes into the existing National System can provide a good example for other countries in the region in similar institutional settings, building on the characteristics that SNPAD already displays and that are key elements for NPs (inter – institutional, multi – sector, decentralised and participative.)

¹⁶ HFA – Monitor Colombia report for the period 2007 – 2010 (<http://www.eird.org/wikien/index.php>)

It is also worth mentioning that in the last few years, the Department for Risk Management has participated in the UNISDR System in a more active manner, and currently plays an important role in promoting and advocating the HFA and the relevance of the NPs in the region. Their active participation and leadership during the first session of the Regional Platform was reflected in the organization of the 2nd Hemispherical Meeting of Mechanisms and Networks for DRR (Santa Marta Meeting), which took place in April 2010.

Another important element in the analysis of the case in Colombia is that it often serves as a reference in terms of the decentralization processes involved in risk management. It is important to highlight recognition of the SNPAD, regarding the challenges that still need to be addressed (furthering the various excellent examples of management in this area in a number of cities), to be able to further influence DRR efforts, at the local level. The process of updating the regulatory framework of the SNPAD, that will surely include the strengthening of management at the local level as one of its pillars, and will build upon like-minded initiatives, will offer a variety of information useful for the development of other NPs.

Sources:

- Legal framework for the National System* (CD created by the DPAD, April 2008).
- Municipal Guidelines for Risk Management (version 2, 2009). *Programa de Reducción de la Vulnerabilidad Fiscal del Estado frente a desastres naturales*, World Bank
- National report on the implementation of the HFA 2007-2009.
- Section about Colombia in *Good Practices of NPs* publication, UNISDR, 2008).
- Section about Colombia in HFA- Pedia
- Presentation delivered by the Colombian National Platform in II Session of the Global Platform for DRR (2009)

Interviews with colleagues from the Disaster Risk Management Department of the Ministry of Interior and Justice, Colombian Red Cross, local authorities of Santiago de Cali, among others (February, 2010).

The Board of Directors of the National Commission for Disasters Prevention and Response (CNE) was identified as the National Platform for DRR in Costa Rica in mid 2004. The main objective of the NP for Costa Rica is to “reduce the causes of human, social, political, and environmental losses associated with the impacts of natural disasters that affect Costa Rica.” To achieve this general objective, the CNE developed a four year institutional plan to implement the National System and work in an efficient manner, following the disaster risk management approach outlined.

In January 2006, a new modification of the national Emergency Law was published (regulatory framework for this area), that includes an entire chapter that defines the management of risk as a public policy cross-cutting to all development policies; it establishes the creation of the National System for Risk Management; together with the agreement of all the institutions to include this area in their own planning and to assign budgets to related activities. Additionally, it identifies the CNE as having the responsibility of developing the National Risk Management Plan, as a strategic planning document, the content of which should be considered by other institutions as a means of assisting in the delineation of their own disaster management tasks.

This amendment also restructures the Board of Directors of the CNE, which currently consists

of a representative of the President of the Republic (that also presides over the Board), the Ministers of the Presidency, Public and Transport Services, Treasury, Public Security, Health, Housing, Human Settlements, Environment and Energy, The Executive Presidents of the Institute for Social Welfare (IMAS), National Insurance Institute (INS), and a representative of the Costa Rican Red Cross.

In 2007, the organizational process of the National System was changed, and it is now under the authority of a recently passed law, namely the National Plan for Risk Management. These actions have been expressed as strategic actions within the country, linked to the National Plan for Development and within the realm of social policies that aim to reduce poverty and achieve the “Millennium Development Goals”.

As a result of these legislative and institutional changes, the NP for Costa Rica is now identified with the National System for Risk Management, and includes the Board of Directors, as a decision making entity, and the CNE, as a governing entity and focal point for the implementation of the HFA. The National system operates through three sub systems in 1) prevention and mitigation; 2) preparedness and response; and 3) for recovery.

Incorporation of the DRR concept and DRR strategic actions in the National Plan for

Development and in sector plans will include the following:

- Allocation of financial resources in institutions, for the development of risk management activities.
- Coordination between bodies that make up the National System
- Formulation of a National Plan for Risk Management
- Reorganization of the national Commission for Risk Prevention and the Institutional Plan with an approach more geared towards prevention.

Risk Management Plans / Linking with National Development Planning

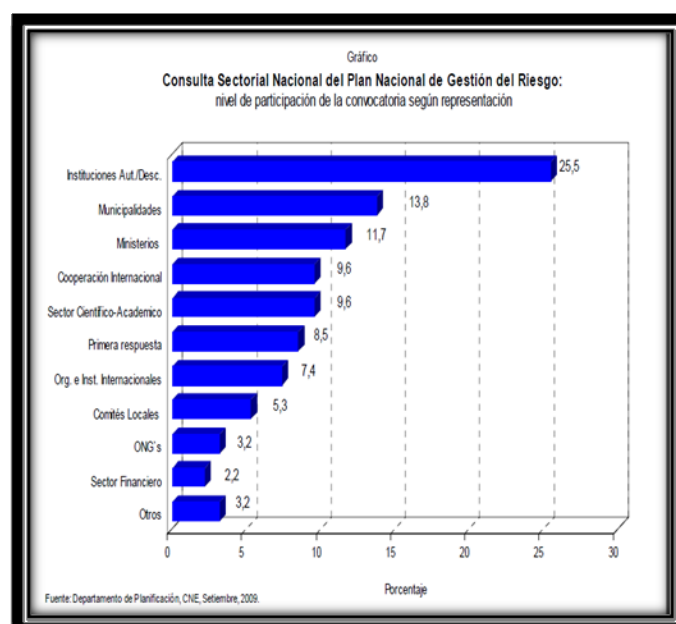
Risk Plans are linked with socio economic goals of the National Development Plan. The Development Plan for 2006 – 2010 has as a central theme, the “Fight against Poverty”, concretely in its Strategic Action Number 9: “national, regional and local programmes for land use planning” establishes the objective to “strengthen risk management capacities in communities with the highest levels of vulnerability associated with environmental and anthropomorphic factors”.

The elaboration of the National Plan for Risk Management (PNGR) began in June 2009 and was approved on the 18 January 2010, with a work plan that extended over a five month period, from June to November. The process of the PNGR was undertaken in various inter - relational stages: 1) establishing risk management policy; 2) sector consultation; 3) systematization and analysis of information; 4) National Forum for validation of the first proposal; 6) expert consultations; 7) final Plan

proposal; 8) presentation and approval of the CNE.

The consultation process included the participation of more than 300 people from 94 institutions and was validated in a National Forum for Risk management that took place in October 2009. The sector consultations were developed through workshops, with participation organised by the actors and potential members of the National System for Risk Management.

Figure 3 – Sectorial consultation for a National System for Risk Management.



The plan responds to two complementary principles: a) it is “an instrument of strategic planning, that permits the systematic and integral articulation of the programmes, it delineates institutional competencies, assigns resources, provides the organization systems and mechanisms for verification and control”; and b) includes the policies for System coordination, that should be lead by the Board of Directors and put into practice through

continuing programmes for “advocacy and capacity development.”

The plan consists of five chapters: the first deals with the context of risk in Costa Rica, the second with the legal foundations of the strategic plan, the third is a brief theoretical outline and conceptual orientation; the fourth is a strategic outline, with its approaches, objectives, principles, guidelines, actions and goals. Finally, the fifth chapter, titled “Policies and their instruments” is an elaboration of risk management theoretical and regulatory terms, and stock taking of legislative and institutional practices. The plan is of visionary character in incorporating approaches in human rights, gender equality, sustainable development, public investment and poverty reduction.

Opportunities and Challenges

Without a doubt, the great challenge of the NP for Costa Rica is consolidating the national System for Risk Management as in the guidelines established by the recently approved PNGR. In this sense, during this year (2010), efforts towards organizational responsibilities, operations and management will be undertaken. The establishing of baselines and indicators for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation of the PNGR will also be done this year.

An important element to highlight is that this plan will feed into the elaboration process of the next national Development Plan. It is also important to underline the reactivation and strengthening of the technical committees of the CNE, as part of participative processes of the NP for Costa Rica.

Sources:

- National Plan for Risk Management 2009-2015.
- National Law for Risk Prevention and Emergencies
- National Report on the implementation of the HFA, 2007-2009
- Section on Costa Rica in *Good Practices of National Platforms* publication, UNISDR, (2007).
- Section on Costa Rica in HFA- Pedia
- Presentation delivered by Costa Rica National Platform in the regional meeting of NPs and Climate Change Focal Points in Panamá, 2008.

Interviews with colleagues from the National Emergency Commission and National Society of the Costa Rican Red Cross, among others (January 2010).

The Guatemalan Government officially launched the National Platform for DRR in September 2009 as *Mesa Nacional de Diálogo* (National Roundtable for Dialogue) in the Management for the Reduction of Disaster Risk in the Framework of ISDR". The launching and first official meeting of the NP was preceded by a preparatory process that was six months long, and started with the establishment of a forum for discussion in March 2009. The National Table for Dialogue was formulated as an institutional entity that acts as: a) National Platform for the monitoring and evaluation of progress in the country in relation to the achievement of the HFA; b) National Commission as per Constitutive Agreement of CEPREDENAC; and c) National Multi – Sector Platform required to continue the National Programme for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation 2009-2011. With the establishment of the National Roundtable for Dialogue in Guatemala, an opportunity is presented which allows the convergence of the Public Sector and Civil Society, from which consensus building regarding defining the priority initiatives that should be implemented in the country to decrease vulnerability, and increase socio-economic and ecological resilience. The National Roundtable for Dialogue is presided over by the Vice President of the Republic and the Executive Secretariat of the Coordinating Body for Disaster Reduction (SE – CONRED). There is also a delegation for the political strategic level, where the coordinators and Commissions representatives constitute the Table; and finally, the operative, or

development level. The focal point of the Roundtable for Dialogue is the Department for Integrative Risk Management, which belongs to the SE-CONRED.

In January 2009, under the political leadership of the Vice President of the Republic, and the technical leadership of SE-CONRED, the National Programme for disaster prevention and mitigation was designed and approved by the National Council of CONRED, and is planned for implementation from 2009 to 2011. This inter-institutional effort has allowed the country to rely on a programmatic and inter – institutional framework that integrates more than five key public sector institutions: the Ministry of Finance, The Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Education, The Ministry of Communications, Infrastructure and Housing, the Secretariat for Planning and Programming, and SEGEPL, amongst others. To these alliances, we add the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the World Bank and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation – AECI-, as entities that support and strengthen the process.

The general objective in the National Roundtable for Dialogue in Guatemala is to become a venue for dialogue that sustains and supports the achievement of the concrete goals necessary for increasing resilience in Guatemala. The specific objectives are listed below:

a) Monitor the advancement of HFA priorities; the policies of Social

Development and Population; the agenda of the National Programme for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation 2009- 2011; the PPRD¹⁷ and other sector policies linked to this area.

- b) Approve and continue executing plans to reach established indicators in the National Programme for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, 2009- 2011.
- c) Develop two annual reports about advancement in the area of risk reduction management according to the commitments made.
- d) Identify priorities, within DRR management, to revise and include relevant actions in national policies and programmes.
- e) Become an entity for technical coordination for international cooperation programmes in the area of DRR management.

A process that sustains the basis of the NP

The reach of the NPs in Guatemala has, in a certain sense, correlated to a series of changes in the vision and structures related to disaster risk management in Guatemala. In 2006, the Guatemalan Government approved the National Programme for Disaster Risk Management in Development Processes 2007 – 2012, which included inter – institutional activities related to not only disaster reduction but also to emergencies. This National Programme was an effort driven by the General Secretariat for Planning (SEGEPLAN), in coordination with SE – CONRED, and constituted the first national

exercise in disaster risk reduction management.

In 2008, taking the national Programme for the Management of Disaster Risk Reduction in Development Processes 2007 – 2012 as a point of reference, the Guatemalan Government decided to develop the National Programme for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation 2009- 2011 with the objective of outlining medium and long term processes, and also measurable and verifiable short term projects. This was approved in March 2009 under the political leadership of the Vice President of the Republic and the technical guidance of SE – CONRED.

National Platform structural and operative consolidation processes

Before the official launch of the Table for Dialogue, developed over a period of six months (March – June 2009), the current National Table for Dialogue for the Management of Disaster Risk Reduction was formed on the basis of three strategic commitments:

- An ***analysis of opportunities***, that allows priority areas for dialogue to be established among key actors interested in the management of disaster risk reduction.
- ***Broadening of initiatives*** promoted by the national Programmes for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation 2009-2011, regarding the base of comprehensive identification of national priorities and their correlation to established guidelines in the Hyogo Framework for Action.

¹⁷ Regional Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction, CEPREDENAC.

- The elaboration of a *protocol for operative functioning*.

In addition to this preparatory process, various positive elements about the structures and processes of the national Table for Dialogue in Guatemala can be identified:

1. Its establishment clearly identifies roles and responsibilities articulated in an explicit vision and mission for the mechanism; anchored in the specific requirements of the country, and integrated in sub-regional and international commitments in the area
2. It includes strategic / political and technical/ operative departments in its operation, that guarantee political influence and technical competency, with strong and complementary leaders.
3. Generates a protocol for operational functioning and develops a programmatic work structure with indicators, and defined system of monitoring.
4. It facilitates strategic alliances between the coordinating entity in the area (SE-CONRED) and with the body with overarching responsibilities (SEGEPLAN).

Another interesting characteristic that the NP for Guatemala illustrates is that from its outset, its work has been concentrated in the areas of prevention and mitigation, understanding that mechanisms and efforts surrounding preparedness and response are already fairly developed in the country.

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This strategic approach could be an interesting element to be considered for the development of other NPs in the region. It is understood, that once approaches of the challenges in prevention and mitigation are consolidated, they can later be integrated into the existent array of disaster preparedness and response mechanisms and actions.

Sources:

- Report of the First Session of the National Roundtable for Dialogue, 2009
- National Programme for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (2009-2011)
- Public Policy for DRR in Guatemala – Proposal for the Formulation Process, Dirección de Gestión Integral del Riesgo (2009)
- Financial Strategy, Work Plan (2009). National Programme for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation -Report 2009- Integración principales procesos de Gestión para la Reducción de Riesgos a los Desastres (Vicepresidencia / CONRED)
- Plan de Desarrollo Institucional 2008-2012- Secretaría Ejecutiva de CONRED.
- Section on Guatemala in HFA- Pedia
- Presentation *Dirección de Gestión Integral de Riesgos* (roles and mandates). 2009.
- Public Policy for DRR in Guatemala (Draft, version 0.0). 2010.

Interviews with colleagues from Dirección de Gestión Integral del Riesgo; AECID; National Society of Red Cross of Guatemala; SE-CEPRENAC, among others (February 2010).

In January 2009, Peru officially launched its National Platform for DRR within the framework of the II Workshop on the National Platform process. The launch of the NP in Peru arrived after various attempts by the Peruvian Government to establish it previously. Under the general premises to drive HFA implementation, the NP for Peru is established as a support forum to the National System for Civil Defense (SINADECI), in which representatives of public and private entities, cooperation entities and civil society all actively participate, thus strengthening SINADECI reach and broadening its institutional base.

SINADECI incorporates all national 'institutional issues', while the national Institute for Civil Defence (INDECI) is the coordinating mechanism in this arena. Peru created SINDECI in 1972 and is currently undergoing an important process of legislation reform, which includes the decentralization of mechanisms, in order to increase risk management capacities at all administrative levels within the country.

NP formation process

One important precedent in terms of efforts to integrate Disaster prevention and preparedness, was the Multi-Sector Commission for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness, created in 2002, in the framework of the Law for Regional Governments (Law No. 27867). This

mechanism is made up of twelve ministries of associated areas along with the National Institute for Civil Defence, which acts as a technical secretariat. From its identification as a national counterpart of the UNISDR in the first years of the ISDR, the National Institute for Civil Defence (INDECI) has communicated Peru's interest and commitment to establishing a National Platform for DRR to UN/ ISDR regularly, in particular since 2004 in the process preceding the Kobe Conference. Unfortunately, a lack of clarity of the nature and added value of the NP, and complications in its formalization were experienced in the process during these years. Despite these setbacks, and based on its commitment and interest in developing the NP, Peru participated, along with Panama, in the First Consultative Meeting on National Platforms, which took place in Pretoria, South Africa in 2006. From 2007 (the year of the first session of the Global Platform for DRR) Peru's efforts and interests were renewed to advance toward the creation of an NP, under the leadership of INDECI, which began to make contact with primary actors. Another important milestone was the International Workshop "Lessons Learned from the Pisco Earthquake", held at the end of 2007, where the necessity to be able to rely on a coordination mechanisms was reiterated.

However, it was in 2008 when the process of the NP became catalysed, and when Peru made its advances in this area more explicit.

Peru participated in the International Workshop for the NPs in Davos, and presented a preliminary Action Plan for the implementation and strengthening of a national coordinating mechanism for DRR.

In September 2008, a “working group” was formed to support this process. In October 2008, a reunion with organizations of international cooperation was carried out, to inform and involve them in the process. In the same month, the Humanitarian network was created, and a National Workshop was held on the new approach to disaster risk management, vision, mission, organization, processes and identification of actors in (SINADECI). In November 2008, the first meeting of the NPs for the Americas was held in Panama, and advances in the process were shared amongst representatives from the NPs throughout the region.

January 23, 2009 saw the launch of the National Workshop for the establishment of the National Platform for DRR in Peru, where a consensus was achieved around the objective, structure, and operation and these contributions and suggestions were incorporated into the initial proposal. Finally, in February, the II National Workshop was undertaken, where the National Platform for DRR in Peru was formally inaugurated, and the first actions for development were defined.

Distinctive characteristics of National Platform processes

The National Platform for DRR in Peru has the objectives of generating a space for agreement in which policies and strategies for

DRR are promoted; encouraging greater participation, coordination and constant dialogue between DRR actors, consolidating the new approach to the management of disaster risk. All the work is outlined in the strengthening of SINADECI. The Presidency of the Ministry Council (PCM) is the coordinating entity for the NP and that which lends it support, meanwhile INDECI acts as Technical Secretariat and Focal Point.

The functioning of the NP envisaged two (2) standard annual plenary sessions and regular meetings of the Management Committee; like the establishment of Working Groups in specific areas, and with a system of indicators for monitoring and evaluation.

Opportunities and challenges

The NP for Peru has brought about wide participation of representatives of public and private institutions, as well as institutions from civil society, cooperative organizations and international organizations of the United Nations System. In particular, the participation of civil society in the process of the NP is one of the most interesting aspects about the Peruvian case. Civil society in Peru is already developing important DRR coordination efforts, with strong leadership coming from some well establish and respected NGOs (for example, PREDES).

The NP initiative links civil society with INDECI under a common objective (the NP). The establishment of a coordination mechanism that reached consensus in the definition of its mission, structure,

membership and functions is, without doubt, a significant achievement.

Another important aspect that this process illustrates is the commitment of the Presidency of the Ministry Council to DRR, to assume coordination of the National Platform. The ability to rely on the support and involvement of this important coordinating entity on a political level, gives greater guarantee of a highly decisive organisation within the NP, and enhances possibilities for political impact.

One of the important challenges the NP will face is to integrate the work of Planning, Finance, Economic and Environmental Ministries, and of the Comptroller General of the Republic through the implementation of tools to include DRR criteria in processes of development planning. It is worth mentioning that Peru has institutionalised the incorporation of risk analysis and climate change adaptation criteria in the National System of Public Investment (SNIP) through the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) between the years 2004 – and 2008. This should be an important means through which the NP could achieve sound impact in prospective risk management.

As in the majority of countries, one of the great challenges is in the strengthening of capacities at the local level. In this sense, there is already a proposal, which aims to study the progress of decentralised land use planning for risk reduction at local level. Local governments have been applying a

participative budget approach, involving the local community in decision making processes around the designation of public funds, which includes actions within the framework for disaster risk reduction.

The NP can contribute to the updating process of the “Strategic Agenda for the Strengthening of Disaster Risk Management in Peru”. The updating of the regulatory framework of SINADECI and of INDECI, may be a major opportunity for Peru and its DRR agenda to have a remodelled framework, in accordance with the current national DRR requirements

Sources:

- Documents of SINADECI and INDECI.
- Sub-regional report for the Regional Platform for DRR (draft)
- National report on the implementation of the HFA in Peru- 2007-2009
- Section on Peru in HFA- Pedia
- Presentation of National Platform of Peru in “Regional Meeting of NP and Climate Change focal points” in Panama, 2008.
- Several documents about the formal launching of National Platform of Peru, February 2009.
- Presentation delivered by Peru in Workshop on National Mechanisms, Davos, 2008.

Interviews with colleagues from INDECI, CAPRADE; Humanitarian Network and Red Cross, among others.

The start of the NP process in the Dominican Republic is associated with the creation of the National Technical Committee for the Prevention and Mitigation of Risks (CTN) in March 2008, in the context of the progressive implementation of the Law of Prevention and Mitigation of Risks. The CTN is ascribed to the National Commission of Emergencies (CNE) and is formed of 22 official permanent representatives of different ministries, state bodies and representatives of the Dominican Red Cross and the academic sector.

The CTN functions as an advisory body, coordinating the activities in risk reduction, and carries out responsibilities such as the updating of the National Plan for Risk Management and the National Plan for Emergencies. Since its creation, the CTN has been identified as a foundational entity for the subsequent development of the NP, and the CNE figures as a national Focal Point for the implementation of the HFA in the Dominican Republic.

The current legal framework for risk management is defined by the previously mentioned Law 147-02 of Risk Management and its Regulations, approved in 2002. This law establishes the instruments of national risk management policy: 1) The National System for Prevention, Mitigation and Response to disasters (SN – PMR); 2) The National Plan for Risk Management; 3) The National Plan for Emergencies; 4) The Integrated National System of information; and 5) The National

Plan for Prevention, Mitigation and Response to disasters.

The law takes into account various coordination entities, some of which are already implemented. There is a National Council, The National Commission for Emergencies (CNE), the Centre for Emergency Operations (COE) and some consultancy teams. Equally, the technical committee, 6 provincial committees and 6 municipal committees have also been recently established. The National Council meets twice a year and each time there is a disaster of great magnitude. The CNE meets once a month and whenever necessary in extraordinary circumstances.

Vagueness about the current status of the National Platform

If it's true that the birth of the National Technical Committee has been identified as the beginning of the NP process, there is still no defined position regarding the format of the NP in the Dominican Republic. In some cases, the Technical Committee has been presented as the NP for DRR in the Dominican Republic (for example in the intervention of the Vice President of the Republic in the second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva, June 2009). Indeed, in specialised portals like the *HFA – Pedia* it is mentioned that the NP process is underway, and that the Technical Committee plays a central role in the process (in the case of *Prevention Web*, the Dominican Republic is

not included in the group of countries with NPs¹⁸).

One of the aspects discussed, is the fact that since the Technical Committee, situated within the structure of the National System, is under various entities already established by the Law, like the National Council for Prevention, Mitigation and Response against Disasters, the CNE and the COE, direct impact at these levels is lessened. The other element outlined is that the legal mandate of the Technical Committee is relatively narrow in scope, and very much focused in lending support to the updating of the National Plan for Risk Management, a process which is relevant, but too precise considering the wider spectrum of actions that are expected from a National Platform. In spite of these doubts in terms of the membership of the CNT as a foundational mechanism for the National Platform, it is clear that from its validation in 2008, the achievements are significant. Among them are as follows:

- Identification of the elements of a DRR strategy
- Elaboration of a project proposal for the formulation of the National Plan for Risk Management

¹⁸ In the consultant's recent visit, the national counterpart of the HFA wasn't too clear in this respect, and recognises that the CTN, despite its key role in catalysing the DRR agenda in the country, has a relatively low profile position within the institutional structure of the national system.

- Attainment of public funds and budget to finance the Technical Committee's activities
- Elaboration of their Annual Operation Work Plan
- Formulation of internal regulations for the functioning of the Committee
- Support to the participation of the Dominican Republic in the second session of the Global Platform for DRR.
- Support for the elaboration of a Guide for municipal emergency plans

The role of the United Nations and International Cooperation

One of the interesting aspects in the case of the evolution of an institutional agenda for DRR in the Dominican Republic, and in particular the commitment to the implementation of the HFA, is the significant and visible role played by the United Nations in the country. The existence of a programme lead by UNDP and financed by the European Union has an important role in the support and strengthening of national institutions in the area of DRR.

The Programme for Prevention and Preparedness for Disasters (PPD) has been an important catalysing factor in the implementation of the Law for Risk Management through solid support to the established post of the National Technical Committee, the creation of consultancy teams and the creation of Provincial and Municipal Prevention and Mitigation Committees. It has also contributed in various thematic areas, framed within the distinct priorities of the

HFA, and promoted training of members of the Technical Committee. The PPD has worked very closely with the UNISDR and has been a great ally in the ISDR system's advocacy tasks in the Dominican Republic. The UNISDR and the PPD are currently organising an inter – agency mission to support the evaluation process around the DRR situation in the Dominican Republic. This type of mission (the first of its kind), could inspire similar relevant actions for the role of the ISDR system in supporting the implementation of the HFA on behalf of governments. This UNDP programme is currently finalising its activities, in mid 2010.

There is also a series of initiatives for the construction of relevant strategies lead by international cooperation, in particular the Delegation of the European Commission, ECHO, the Spanish cooperation AECID, Inter-American Bank (IADB) and the World Bank. The establishment of a National Cooperation Platform for Risk management has allowed the interaction and articulation of all these activities. One of the most relevant initiatives within the field of international cooperation is the budgetary support provided by the AECID to the Dominican Government to finance actions aligned with the National Plan for Risk Management, channelled through the National Fund for Prevention, Mitigation and Response to Disasters.

The work guidelines associated with this budgetary support include: 1) formulation of the National Plan for Risk Management; 2) constitution and launching of the national Fund for Prevention, Mitigation and Response

against Disasters; 3) creation of risk management units in institutions and councils, like the implementation of coordination mechanisms between members of the National System, as much in the inter – sector sphere as in the inter – territorial; 4) reduction of the number of people and settlements in conditions vulnerable to natural or environmental threats; 5) support and adequate preparation for regional, provincial, municipal and local networks; 6) setting up, training and empowerment of Regional, Municipal, and Provincial Committees of the PMR; 7) influence public investment budgets of different state institutions, in order that they include Risk Management as a transversal element; and 8) drafting and approving risk management methodologies.

Another of the important initiatives on the DRR agenda is related to the project financed by IADB and implemented by the Department for Land Use Planning and Development (DGODT), and of the Ministries of the Economy, Planning and Development.

This project considers various components related to the strengthening and inclusion of a perspective of land use planning in the work of risk management committees and in the educational sector, and a component that considers the creation of a unit in charge of the inclusion of risk reduction criteria in processes of public investment and development planning. In the context of the new Planning Law, that creates a new institutional environment in this field, the objectives of this project can have significant scope for corrective and prospective risk

management in the country. The project will end in 2011, though it is envisaged that it will be extended until 2012.

Opportunities and challenges

Together with the start up of the Technical Committee, there are a variety of relevant initiatives in the country, which employ the implementation of the Law for Risk Management as a common axis, as well as progress toward a national consolidated system for the prevention and mitigation of disasters. The NP process should take on and channel all these efforts in order that effective and sustained impact is made in risk reduction actions. In this sense, the formulation of a National Plan for Risk Management represents an important challenge and opportunity in consolidating the DRR agenda within the country. In this sense, the most convenient and harmonious form of advancing in the establishment of the NP should be identified.

A key step is the establishment of a mechanism for the implementation of the National Plan for Prevention, Mitigation and Response to Disasters, that permits the financing of risk reduction activities at all levels (national, provincial and local.) The budgetary support of the AECID also constitutes an opportunity, and its implementation a challenge. In the same way, the establishment of Committees for

Prevention, Mitigation and Response at all levels will ensure that these entities elaborate and implement their own plans for emergencies and risk management.

Sources:

- National Report on the Implementation of the HFA 2007-2009
- National Plan for Disaster Risk Management, 2001.
- Plan of Action of the National Technical Committee, 2009.
- Section on Dominican Republic in HFA- Pedia
- Presentation delivered by representative of Dominican Republic regional meeting of NP and Climate Change focal points, Panamá, 2008
- Document of the National Emergency Committee about the DRR actions in Dominican Republic (*brochure*, 2009).
- Reglamento 874-09 de Aplicación de la Ley No. 147-02 de Gestión de Riesgos (2009).
- Statement made by the Vice-president of Dominican Republic in II Session of the Global Platform for DRR, Geneva, June 2009,
- First Country Document of Dominican Republic, VII Plan of Action, DIPECHO (2009).

Interviews with colleagues from the National Emergency Commission, members of the National Technical Committee; Planning Secretariat; PPPD; AECID; Red Cross, among others.

V. Recommendations and suggestions

In light of the analysis of the previous sections and the evidence gathered in interviews, some conclusions and recommendations can be drawn, for strengthening the processes of the NPs currently in operation, as well as to orient and strengthen the work of the ISDR System in further promoting the development of these mechanisms.

Guidelines adapted to the regional context

The general perception of the national and sub-regional actors is that an adaptation of the NP guidelines to the regional context, where contextual and situational considerations are taken into account, is lacking. The Guidelines currently serve as an important advocacy tool, and a means for identification of general roles within the United Nations System, but do not provide a concrete guide for the development of the NPs. In this sense, the case for the promotion of NPs is well grounded, but not much light is shed on exactly how to develop them.

In particular, additional emphasis needs to be placed on more practical guides and outlines on how to develop the NP process not addressed in the current Guidelines, which would enable a broadening of the dynamics surrounding the NPs; making it difficult to speak of them as mechanisms with common goals and objectives in the particular countries. There are specific elements that must be included as part of the composition of the NPs, in order that the process is sustainable, and has the desired political impact.

The assumption of creating this guide from a global document would be setting up for failure, at least with regards to its effective application in the Americas at the regional level. In that sense, the possibility of contextualizing the NPs at a more regional level would also create guidelines that are slightly better prescribed, and oriented towards the impact of the processes under development, bringing together the relevant actors in this field. Also noted is the need to publish a document similar to “From Words to Action”, where the procedures and programmatic areas required to carry out the development and strengthening of the NPs are described in greater detail and in a more structured format, and from which the NPs and the ISDR System can monitor their growth.

A more consistent and strategic lobbying effort

An element that clearly arises from the country visits, and from the interviews, has to do with the need to change the current emphasis on the promotion of the establishment of the NPs *per se*, presented to the national counterparts as a progress indicator in the implementation of the HFA. In this sense, a broader lobbying effort, tied to the need for advancing the disaster risk reduction as a primarily multi-sector and multi-disciplinary task

is needed. The establishment of the NPs must not be seen as an objective in and of itself. Often, the “number” of NPs established is presented as an HFA progress indicator in the regions, which encourages an effort centered in the formal constitution of the NP, without greater reflection and analysis on the process this bears to the development of the NP itself.

The traditional channels of communication and dissemination of materials and information on the NPs pass almost exclusively through the National Implementation Focal Points of the HFA. These Focal Points, because of their institutional affiliation and position in the field, are often not the ones in contact with the actors and groups most tied to the development processes in the countries, which are essential to the development of the NPs. In this sense, greater emphasis on advocacy work with non-traditional national counterparts tied to disaster risk management is needed before the establishment of more NPs in the region. Just as a Guidelines version more suited to and based on regional contexts is required, so is a “regionalized” communication strategy of the Guidelines, and of all the material that guides the regional advocacy work in order that it reaches the sectors and actors affiliated with the NP process.

The effort being undertaken by the IFRC in coordination with the UNISDR Americas to construct a frame of reference that supports the incorporation of the National Societies in the creation and dynamic of the NPs is an encouraging example. The possibility of creating a product designed for a more specific public goal (like the National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent), with the identification of potential roles and value added for their participation in the NPs should be a more systematic task.

Need for a joint strategy and action plan with regional counterparts

The promotion of the NPs has been a task centered fundamentally in the UNISDR and its regional offices, with very limited monitoring of the processes. As presented in the previous section, some advocates in the countries and in the sub-regional institutions are required in order to generate sustainable, appropriate processes for the countries. The contacts whose efforts have led to the identification and/or launching of the NPs have been primarily between the UNISDR and the HFA National Focal Points. In many cases this has reinforced the vague but very present image of the NPs, and of the promotion of parallel structures, a notion that is reinforced when regional counterparts are not largely involved from the beginning, when the formation of the NP in any given country is promoted.

The joint planning and work of the ISDR System with sub-regional counterparts is key in being able to push forward the agenda of the NPs in an organic and sustainable manner, and in harmonizing efforts to implement the HFA through existing strategies and action plans developed in the region from much more participatory and inclusive processes than the global consultation process that preceded the adoption of the HFA.

If we focus on the Central American region, the process for the construction of the Central American Policy for Integrated Risk Management (PCGIR) is a necessary consideration, and should be a key frame of reference in reorienting and guiding the strategic development of the NPs that fall under the CEPREDENAC. The objective of the PCGIR is the generation of a framework for integrated disaster risk management, linking the decision making process at the political level to their application through different mechanisms and tools. The relationship between the risk management and the economic, social and environmental cohesive management pursued by the PCGIR, and the work pursued by the NPs in the national sphere, in fact share common objectives. The outlined axes of the PCGIR should also serve as orienting axes for the work of the NPs¹⁹.

Stemming from the framework provided by the PCGIR process, a more explicit grounding for the work of the NPs within CEPREDENAC's Multi-year Plan, particularly in the area of institutional strengthening, can be promoted. An important precedent in Central America, is that the foundation of CEPREDENAC National Commissions with the institutional support of three of the five NPs that have been identified in the region (Panama, El Salvador and Guatemala). Nevertheless, the developments between the three National Commissions/National Platforms are very different in terms of structure and work dynamic. In the case of Costa Rica and Nicaragua (the other NPs in the region), although their base resides in their National Prevention and Attention to Disaster Systems, there are many differences in the NP structure, and it is difficult to find the common denominators one would hope for; given that both, at least, share the general objectives and goals of the NPs. In particular, the broadening and coordination entailed by the construction of the PCGIR with other programs and strategies from sector authorities of the Central American Integrated System (for example agriculture; environment, water resources; food security) offers a greater opportunity to recreate and activate these dynamics at national level within the work dynamic of the NPs.

¹⁹ The PCGIR can be consulted at the following link:

Regarding the insular Caribbean, in particular those countries grouped under CARICOM, the sub-regional report presented before the DRR Regional Platform in 2009, stated that “in many of the Caribbean states, the traditional National Emergency Coordination mechanisms had complications in the transition towards the creation of NPs, and it was deemed necessary to finalize the design of a Sub-regional Platform and Implementation Plan to build and facilitate this process”. On the other hand, the recent transformation of CDERA to a new entity under the name *Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Management Agency* (CDEMA) must be noted. The transition from CDERA to CDEMA has the potential to add significant momentum to HFA implementation efforts, and aids advancing the establishment of functioning NPs. This transition would be reflected in a new structure and mandate broadened to include the adoption of the reduction of disaster loss and practices and policies of national and regional level mitigation, with cooperation arrangements and mechanisms to facilitate the development of a culture of reduction of losses associated with disasters.

Box No. 4 Consideration and adaptation of previous experiences in the Caribbean

Consideration and adaptation of previous examples in the Caribbean

The IASP and CDM initiatives, while very similar to the HFA, are not absolutely congruent with it. They represent concepts, insights and thinking on the same continuum, but prepared and presented for implementation at different points in time and apparently to slightly different interest and stakeholder groups. As there are significant overlaps and they share much with the HFA and its “platforms” based approach, one way to look at the situation is to recognize that the HFA PLATFORMS (Regional / National etc) can only succeed if PLANKS already identified by these prior conceptual approaches are appropriately co-opted, adapted and or adopted.

Extract from the report on the Caribbean for the First Session of the DRR Regional Platform of the Americas, April 2009, Panama.

It is also worth mentioning that this sub-region has been the focus of an important effort of building a sub-regional approach that facilitates and promotes the formation of NPs. The formulation of a Caribbean Platform Program (CPP) is significant. The CPP has been carefully designed to follow-up and complement *the Comprehensive Disaster Management Approach in the Caribbean* (CDM), supported and implemented by CDEMA, and is geared toward the establishment of the NPs, and Adaptation to Climate Change. The creation of the CPP was led by the UNISDR Americas regional office in conjunction with the CDEMA Executive Secretariat and with the BCPR. The proposal was launched in a special session within the frame of the first DRR Global Platform session in 2007. As stated in the

aforementioned Caribbean sub-regional report: “The establishment of the CPP and the formalization of the Focal Points for the NPs are a high priority necessity and an opportunity for action”. Unfortunately, the CPP has not surpassed the creation phase even though it is fully effective. In fact, this type of integrated programme, in support of the organic and sustainable development of the NPs could serve as an example not only for the Caribbean region, but could also inspire similar programs in other sub regions throughout the Americas.

Regarding the Andean countries, PREDECAN has left an important legacy in terms of DRR tools, studies and processes. Of special relevance, are the national roundtables that were promoted within the frame of PREDECAN initiatives, and the detailed analysis of the legal and institutional framework of the Andean countries, both of which are very relevant inputs that could feed into the development of NP processes in the sub-region.

There is a strong commitment from Peru, which holds the current Chairmanship of CAPRADE to foster the NPs within the sub-regional context. In order to advance the NP leadership role of CAPRADE, there is a need for building a strategic vision framed within the implementation of the Andean Strategy for Disaster Prevention and Relief (EAPAD)²⁰. The Andean Action Plan for the EAPAD for 2005-2010 already makes explicit reference, in its strategic guidelines, to “maintaining and strengthening those national platforms or systems for disaster risk reduction, with the aim of working towards the achievement of sustainable development goals.” It also mentions “decentralizing risk management and promoting active participation from civil society.” The forthcoming updating process for the EAPAD Action Plan provides a good opportunity for a more cohesive and planned approach from the sub-regional level to tackle the strengthening of NPs processes, profiting from the arsenal of tools and processes that have been catalyzed under the initiatives developed by PREDECAN.

At the hemispheric level, important steps have been taken between UNISDR Americas and the General Secretariat of the OAS through its Department of Sustainable Development (OAS/DSD) towards improving coordination and building a stronger partnership to support the building process of the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. While noting the success of achievements so far, there are still some areas for further advancement, such as delineating the role of the Inter-American Disaster Mitigation Network (RIMD) in the whole context of the regional platform process, and the ISDR system in the region.

²⁰ Thematic Axis No. 1 of EAPAD makes reference to the “strengthening of the institutions and capacity development at the Andean sub-regional, national and local levels” identifying the need to promote the creation, modernization and strengthening of permanent institutional mechanisms or schemes of disaster prevention and management, with an increasing delegation of responsibility to local and sub-national authorities.

Institutional venues such as the Inter- American Committee for Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR), while very much dormant since its inception, could play an important role in the whole governance structure of the regional platform, together with the sub-regional mechanisms in place. These Inter-American specialized mechanisms and arrangements could be part of a more strategic approach for supporting and strengthening NP processes in the Americas.

Buy in of NPs within the United Nations System

Finally, it is necessary to bring attention to the pending task of the buy in of National Platforms within the United Nations System itself, as well as the ISDR System in general. Just as permanent planning and consultation with sub-regional counterparts is vital, so is joint regional level planning with the United Nations agencies and with the ISDR System counterpart. Furthering the work with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) has been suggested as one of the most relevant approaches to achieve this objective, in terms of gaining more effective involvement of the Resident Coordinator system in the support of the HFA implementation in the countries²¹. Although growing efforts on behalf of UNISDR have been carried out to create more venues for interaction with the Resident Coordinators in relevant regional meetings, and special information kits have been designed for them, there is a strong sense that these are timid attempts and much more work needs to be done in this region in order to engage Resident Coordinators and their country teams to fully embrace the roles already identified for them in the NP Guidelines.

One of the inter-agency mechanisms active in the region is RED-LAC, which includes a thematic group on disaster risk reduction, led by UNISDR Americas. Even though the group has served to broaden the thematic focus of the RED-LAC, the leadership of UNISDR has been volatile and the group has not had concrete impacts. Nevertheless, there is a growing perception of more active leadership coming from UNISDR Americas and better enabling conditions for generating joint activities with other members of the group. The work done by OCHA's regional office with the United Nations Emergency Teams (UNETE) has been instrumental in inducing broader themes of DRR, which are included in the training agenda of the UNETE's.

It has also been suggested that UNISDR could benefit from reflecting upon the lessons learned from the experience of the secretariats responsible for the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in the United Nations system. The MEA's are characterized for a creative focus in facilitation, mobilization and coordination of national,

²¹ The common objective of the UNDG is to provide more coherent, effective and efficient support to countries in achieving the goals agreed upon at the international level.

sub-regional and sectoral focal points around goals similar to those of the HFA, and have managed to achieve significant involvement of the private sector and civil society²².

The possibility of carrying out joint missions, for DRR assessment or advocacy purposes is seen as one of the tasks that could be useful, not only to guide and support the efforts of the countries in DRR, but also to build a more palpable face and strengthen the work-dynamic of the ISDR System. Dominican Republic, as per request of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, will be the first experience for this kind of inter-agency initiative²³.

UNDP, through its Resident Representatives and the specialized entity BCPR, need be a much more active counterpart in the NP arena. Not only because of its thematic mandate, but also because of the significant work in the region in the promotion of and support for the focus of DDR national systems, it must be a critical gear in coordination with UNISDR Americas for NP development. By the same token, mechanisms such as CADRI need to be utilized in a more systematic manner for the development of NP capacities, specifically as related to the training of multi-stakeholder processes, which are notoriously weak in the current NP dynamic.

Consolidation of Thematic Areas: concrete agendas and sustainability of the process

Another suggestion stemming from the interviews and the experience from successful initiatives is further promoting and/or strengthening the thematic groups or committees of the existing NPs. By having a thematic focus, these thematic groups could more easily translate their work into dynamic work plans with more measureable objectives. The other interesting element of this perspective is that the more technical and specific themes associated with the objectives and mandates of the institutions represented minimizes, to a certain degree, the risk of staff changeover in the group, which many times leads to the weakening of the NP process (as frequently happens in changes of government).

This assumes that in those technical/thematic committees have greater job stability. In other words, the work at the level of structured thematic committees around specific objectives could give continuity to the NPs beyond the eventual and temporary inactivity of the focal point or the NP coordinating mechanism, while, at the same reinforcing the NP process.

“Development agenda” as a pivotal focus for NP dynamics

²² Recommendation carried out in the HFA implementation for the Caribbean subregional report, prepared for the first session of the DDR Regional Platform of the Americas, Panama, 2009.

²³ The team will be led by the UNISDR Americas and will be comprised of representatives from ECLAC; IFRC; WMO; OAS, UNDP and UNESCO. The mission is planned for May 2010.

A large number of interviewees also agree that there is a need to work with new actors and sectors that have defined roles in development agendas and processes and in the countries. In that sense the point of departure of the NPs should be built around a development agenda and, to that effect, project implementation addressing priority development areas and needs as identified by the States. Some of these areas are energy, transport, health, education, agriculture, industry, management of water resources, environmental management, among other issues that surround development agendas.

The work being done in the region by the specialized subregional bodies (CEPREDENAC; CAPRADE, CDEMA, for instance) and through international technical cooperation (AECID; GTZ, BID, World Bank) with the National Public Investment Systems, Finance and Economic Ministries emerges as one of the more strategic fronts to foster the DRR agenda. For instance, methodologies for the inclusion of risk evaluation criteria have already been developed and being utilized in public investment processes. Initiatives for the development of powerful tools for probabilistic evaluation of losses associated with the impact of natural hazards are underway and will provide tools and data for working with the ministries of finances and national planning authorities, both for corrective and prospective risk management²⁴. It is interesting to note that these kind of vital initiatives are usually unfolding completely outside from the current work scope of the NPs

Another emergent element in the DRR arena is the influential work performed by national authorities with accountability responsibilities in the countries. For example, the National Comptroller Offices has been highlighted as one of the powerful drivers in furthering DRR agendas. Nevertheless, they are rarely (if at all) being included as part of the national platform composition. There are some examples in countries in the region where the work of these authorities has had a critical role of ensuring accountability for those institutions that have particular disaster risk management roles in the country. This is a key issue for changing the logic that prevention and mitigation does not lead to political dividends, and would also give a spin on the dominating perception that nobody takes charge when emergencies and disasters occur, and that they fall under the responsibility of “nature”. A culture of prevention should also be based on a culture of accountability, and in that sense the active involvement of the auditors in the NP dynamic is very important.

²⁴ This refers to the World Bank led initiative CAPRA (see [www. capra.org](http://www.capra.org)).

VI. Final Considerations

In summing up the findings of this study, we can conclude that a significant consensus exists on the different development aspects of the NPs in the region, and their influence in the DRR agendas. This consensus stems from an objective analysis of the existing information on NPs, and from the qualified opinion of a group of staff and practitioners with a great deal of experience in the field of risk management in the region.

The first conclusion is that the notion of NPs has opened a space for actors and authorities associated with disaster risk management that did not previously have defined mechanisms from which to channel their vision and input. This has had a positive impact not only at the national level but has also strengthened the work of sub-regional programs and authorities that also have promoted a multi-sector, multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder vision in the areas of DRR associated with their objectives.

Other processes have been underway in some of the NPs in the region that could serve as a reference to direct the establishment and strengthening of other NPs. The process being carried out for the establishment of the NP in Guatemala demonstrates many positive areas for analysis. By the same token, the current NP creation process in Dominican Republic also displays the potential role the ISDR system could play to catalyze the DRR agenda in a country. In particular, the contribution of a single relevant counterpart such as UNDP, and the up to date unedited inter-agency diagnostic on the need for DRR shows signs of the different tasks that could be taken up by the ISDR system. The progress made in Costa Rica and the consultation process that had the recent approval of the new Risk Management Plan 2010-2015 as its corollary, which incorporates issues of human rights, gender equality, secure development, public investment and poverty reduction, and with an impact in institutions' planning and budget, provides elements and important references for other NPs. And, of course, the process of updating the basis of the National System of Disaster Prevention and Response in Colombia, where there is a focus on transition with emphasis on risk management at the sub-national and local levels, which are the weakest and least represented in terms of NPs work, must be followed very closely.

Despite the process, the NPs show a wide diversity of formats and work dynamics, in the majority of cases led by institutional authorities that in practice are focused on disaster prevention and preparedness. To a certain extent, this has limited the fundamental tasks of the NPs with regards to their political influence, and to help foster the inclusion of DRR in country planning and development processes.

The mechanisms utilized by the UNISDR, and/or strengthening of the NPs, have lacked a communication strategy adapted to the regional context, and that has been to the detriment

of the NPs. In this sense, it is important to promote, early on, a DRR diagnostic, as that will lead case-specialized adaptation to the NP and also encourage a more organic process. The imperative for increasing the number of NPs as a type of progress indicator for HFA implementation is not only dangerous, but ignores the challenges implied by the development of these types of mechanisms. The degrees of institutional evolution in country DRR agendas are different and models that could be adapted to all the needs cannot exist. Once the NPs are established without the appropriate conceptual bases and operative, years can be lost before being able to take hold of the process again.

Related to the aforementioned, and in light of the diversity of sub-regional mechanisms and regulatory and institutional frameworks presented by the region, it is evident that an NP Guidelines document that, while maintaining the already outlined general principles and objectives, also progresses in the identification and characterization of the regional/sub regional contexts where the processes must be carried out, is needed. In addition, a consensus - based strategy and action plan with the regional counterparts and the UNISDR Americas that can be developed as one of the pillars of the creation of the Regional Platform, must be added. The work carried out for the formulation of initiatives such as the Caribbean Platform Programme (CPP) must be taken up again and could serve as a reference for a more systematic approach to NPs in other sub-regions.

By the same token, the emphasis on the work of the NPs must be more grounded in a development agenda and with a human security perspective based on quality of life measures, where the conditions to impact development policies and planning truly exist. In that sense, one of the key work areas is the production of a material guide for the implementation of risk reduction through strategic development areas for the countries, allowing for the incorporation of sectors and other actors with elements in the agenda and with concrete objectives for the NP dynamics. This is a concrete task for the ISDR system in the region that could be synergistically added to processes such as the creation of the Central American Policy for Integrated Disaster Risk Management; the consolidation of the CDERA to CDEMA transition process in the Caribbean, or the formulation of a new work plan for the Andean Strategy for DRR.

In a similar fashion, and at the hemispheric level, the work being carried out by the Secretariat of the OAS, through the Section of Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation of the Department of Sustainable Development (SEDI), in areas such as Education, Water Resources Management, Climate Change, Energy, Cost/Benefit Analysis, among others that fall within its activity portfolio, could be taken advantage of. In this sense, the Inter-American Disaster Mitigation Network (RIMD in Spanish) could take on an important role in the generation of the aforementioned material guide based on its work in strengthening technical cooperation, supporting and orienting the participation of sectors associated to the countries' development agendas in the NP dynamics.

Another specific task for the UNISDR is to infuse a greater sense of relevance of the ISDR and the HFA in the ISDR system in general, and of the United Nations system agencies in particular. The role in supporting countries with HFA implementation on behalf of the Regional Coordinators and their country teams is still included in a very “timid” manner in the various activity portfolios and action priorities. A comprehensive notion of what the role means in practice doesn’t seem to exist, and in that context, the NP issue is in great part an unknown matter. The intensification of the work with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) is key. This type of “tailor-made” material guide for key counterparts of the ISDR System should be generated, in order to achieve the articulation a clear and consistent argument for the roles and responsibilities in the NP processes.

Without a doubt, it is clear that the notion of NPs must surpass the imperative of the “form” of its establishment, and retake the role initially foreseen in its guidelines. It must be understood that the NPs are based on providing a vehicle and mechanism for a multi-sector and multi-stakeholder approach in addressing DRR, and tied to the development planning processes of the countries. Five years since the adoption of the HFA, this shift in perspective of the NPs is urgent if one does not want to continue promoting institutional arrangements that although they have had a positive impact, are still far from achieving at the level of impact in DRR required by the countries, and the implementation of the HFA.

ANNEX I – LIST OF INTERVIEWED

- Alvarado, Percy** - Director de Cooperación Internacional, INDECI. Punto Focal de la PN de Perú, Lima. Modalidad: entrevista personal.
- Castaño, Nelson**- Coordinador de Gestión de Riesgo a Desastres. Oficina Zona de las Américas. Panamá. Modalidad: entrevista personal.
- Cotte, Walter**. Director Ejecutivo. Cruz Roja Colombiana. Bogotá. Modalidad: entrevista personal
- Durán, Rolando**- consultor internacional –lideró la formulación de la PCGIR, con amplia experiencia en la institucionalidad regional ligada a la RRD. San José; Costa Rica. Modalidad: entrevista personal.
- Feliciano, Mercedes**. Directora, Unidad de Gestión de Riesgos de Desastres. Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo. Santo Domingo, RD. Modalidad: entrevista personal
- Flores Campos, Ronny** – Sub Jefe Nacional Prevención y Preparación para Desastres. Cruz Roja Costarricense, San José. Modalidad: entrevista personal
- García Marín, Mercedes**. Oficina Técnica de Cooperación, AECID. Coordinadora de Plataforma de Cooperantes para la Reducción de Riesgos. Santo Domingo. Modalidad: entrevista personal
- González, Pablo**. Jefe, Gestión de Riesgos y Adaptación al Cambio Climático. Dpto. de Desarrollo Sostenible, OEA. Modalidad: entrevista remota.
- Guerrero Calvo, Juanita**. Consejo Directivo. Centro Nacional del Voluntariado. CENAVOL. Perú (miembro de la Red Humanitaria y de la PN de Perú). Perú. Modalidad: breve intercambio de ideas sobre el tema de la consultoría
- Guijalba Rosell, Cecilia** – Gerente Comité Especial de Responsabilidad Social, Medio Ambiente y SSO. Sociedad Nacional de Industrias. SIN (responsable del Grupo Empresarial promotor de la PN). Perú. Modalidad: breve intercambio de ideas sobre el tema de la entrevista.
- Javiel, Daniel** - Director General, Cruz Roja Guatemalteca. Guatemala. Modalidad: entrevista personal.
- Julliard, Valerie**. Representante Residente, PNUD. Santo Domingo. Modalidad: entrevista personal.
- Leal, María Ángela**– Directora del Dpto. de Gestión Integral de Riesgos de la Secretaría Ejecutiva de CONRED y Coordinadora Nacional para la Reducción de Desastres. Guatemala. Modalidad: entrevista personal
- Leroux de Ramírez, Ligia**. Presidenta de la Sociedad Nacional de la Cruz Roja Dominicana. Santo Domingo. Modalidad: entrevista personal.

- Lucke, Oscar** – Jefe de la Unidad de Prevención y Mitigación de Desastres, Comisión Nacional de Prevención y Atención de Desastres, Costa Rica. Modalidad: entrevista personal

- Luna Paulino, Luis.** Presidente de la Comisión Nacional de Emergencias y Punto Focal Nacional para implementación del MAH en Rep. Dominicana. Modalidad: entrevista personal

- Marcos, Ángel** –Secretaría Ejecutiva de CEPREDENAC. Coordinador regional, Línea de Prevención de Desastres. AECID-CEPREDENAC. Guatemala. Modalidad: entrevista personal.

- Márquez, Carlos Iván Pérez.** Director General de Socorro Nacional, Cruz Roja Colombiana, Bogotá. Modalidad: entrevista personal.

- Marroquín Abrego, Teresa** – Cruz Roja Guatemalteca- Responsable Secretaría Nacional de Desastres- Guatemala. Modalidad: entrevista personal.

- Martínez Battle, José Ramón.** Responsable de Proyectos, Oficina Técnica de Cooperación, AECID. Santo Domingo. Modalidad: entrevista personal

- Mena, Ricardo.** Coordinador Regional, ONU/EIRD Américas. Panamá. Modalidad: entrevista personal

- Meyreles Vicioso, Lourdes F.** Coordinadora Gral. Programa de Prevención de Desastres y Gestión de Riesgo. Dirección Gral. De Ordenamiento y Desarrollo Territorial. Santo Domingo, RD. Modalidad: entrevista personal.

- Narváez, Lizardo** –PREDECAN, Asesor de Dirección (iniciativa de apoyo a la prevención de desastres en la Comunidad Andina que finalizó a mediados del 2009). Modalidad: audioconferencia.

- Picado, Carlos** – Jefe de la Unidad de Planificación. Comisión Nacional de Prevención y Atención de Desastres, Costa Rica. Modalidad: entrevista personal

- Solano, Jessica** - Secretaría Ejecutiva de CEPREDENAC. Gerente Técnica/Coordinadora del Plan de Acción. AECID-CEPREDENAC. Guatemala- Modalidad: entrevista personal.

- Chaparro, Pabel Ángeles** –Responsable de Gestión de Riesgo y Desastres. Cruz Roja Peruana. Perú. Modalidad: entrevista personal

- Flores, Claudia** –Sub-Directora del Dpto. Gestión Integral de Riesgos de la Secretaría Ejecutiva de CONRED. Guatemala Modalidad: entrevista personal.

- Morales, Iván** - Secretaria Ejecutiva de CEPREDENAC. Secretario Ejecutivo. Guatemala. Modalidad: entrevista personal.

- Orlando Esquivel Hernández**- Sub Director de Socorros y Operaciones – Cruz Roja Costarricense. Costa Rica. Modalidad: entrevista personal

- Palomino, Luis** – actual Presidente de CAPRADE y Director del INDECI. Perú. Modalidad: entrevista personal
- Pulido, Luz Amanda** – Directora, Dirección de Gestión de Riesgos, Sistema Nacional de Prevención y Atención de Desastres (SNPAD), Bogotá, Colombia. Modalidad: entrevista personal.
- Rebaza, Ana María** – Asesora Regional en Respuesta a Desastres, OCHA (lideró el desarrollo de la de la RED Humanitaria en Perú). Perú. Modalidad: entrevista personal
- **Vargas Carrillo, Alfonso** – Director Seccional de Socorros y Servicios Especiales, Seccional Valle de Cauca, Cruz Roja Colombiana, Cali. Modalidad: entrevista personal
- Vanderhosrt, Nerys**. Secretaria Ejecutiva de la Comisión Nacional de Emergencias y Punto Focal Alternativo para MAH en Rep. Dominicana. Santo Domingo. Modalidad: entrevista personal.
- **Van Wynsberghe; Marc**. Coordinador Internacional. Programa de Prevención y Preparación ante Desastres (PPD). Santo Domingo. Modalidad: entrevista personal

ANNEX II: PROCESSES OF NATIONAL PLATFORMS IN THE AMERICAS

COUNTRY	Formal launching of the process	Name/ Base Mechanism	HFA National Focal Point	Contact
Argentina	Launched beginning 2007	Plataforma Nacional para la RRD de Argentina	Comisión Cascos Blancos Capital Federal, Buenos Aires	Embajador Gabriel M. Fuks , Presidente Capital Federal, Argentina E-mail: gfu@mrecic.gov.ar
Bolivia	Launched in October 2009	Plataforma Nacional para la RRD del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia (Sistema Nacional de Reducción de Riesgos y Atención de Desastres y/o Emergencias, SIRADE)	Vice-Ministry of Civil Defense La Paz, Bolivia Tel: (+591-2) 243-0112, 243-0770, URL: http://www.defensacivil.gov.bo/	Mr. Gil Hernán Tuco Ayma , Vice-Ministro Vice-Ministerio de Defensa Civil Tel. (591-2) 251-0973; fax: (591-2) 243-1844 E-mail: videcicode@gmail.com
Colombia	Identified in mid 2004	Plataforma Nacional para RRD (Sistema Nacional de Prevención y Atención de Desastre)s	Dirección Nacional de Gestión de Riesgos Bogotá, Colombia Tel:+ 571-375-0934/0842 Email: direcciongen@dgp.gov.co	Sra. Luz Amanda Pulido Director de la DNGR E-mail: direcciongen@dgp.gov.co E-mail alternativo: marthaf@dgp.gov.co
Costa Rica	Identified in mid 2004	Junta Directiva de la Comisión Nacional de Prevención y Atención de Desastres	Comisión Nacional de Prevención de Riesgos y Atención de Emergencias (CNE) San José, Costa Rica Tel:(+506) 2-220-0378/232-5252 E-mail: comunicaciones@cne.go.cr Website: http://www.cne.go.cr	Arq. Vanessa Rosales , President Tel: (+506) 2-220-0378 / fax:(+506) 2-296-5225 E-mail: presidencia@cne.go.cr

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COUNTRY	Formal launching of the process	Name/ Base Mechanism	HFA National Focal Point	Contact
Dominican Republic	Procces begins in mid 2008	Comité Técnico de Prevención y Mitigación de Desastres	Comisión Nacional de Emergencias Santo Domingo, Rep. Dominicana E-mail: coe_subdir@verizon.net.do Website: www.coe-repdom.4t.com/	Mayor General Luís Antonio Luna Paulino , Presidente, CNE Tel:(+809) 472-8614-17
El Salvador	Launched in July 2008	Plataforma Nacional de RRD (Comisión Nacional de CEPREDENAC)	Servicio Nacional de Estudios Territoriales SNET San Salvador, El Salvador Tel: (+503)- 2283-2241 / Fax (+503)-2223-7792 Website: www.ineter....	Sra. Elda Vásquez de Godoy , Director INETER E-mail: edegodoy@marn.gob.sv
Guatemala	Launched in September 2009	Mesa Nacional de Diálogo (Comisión Nacional de CEPREDENAC)	Coordinadora Nacional para la Reducción de Desastres (CONRED) Tel:+(502) 2332-1189/3854-1411 E-mail: informacion@conred.org.gt Website: http://www.conred.org/	Ing. Alejandro Maldonado , Sec. Ejecutivo Tel: (+502) 2385/4144; / Fax: (+502) 2362/8361 E-mail: amaldonado@conred.org.gt Enlace de la PN: María Ángela Leal Email: aleal@conred.org.gt
Jamaica	Identified in July 2008	National Platform for DRR (National Disaster Committee)	Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) Tel: +(876) 928-5111/4, Fax: +(876) 928-5503/8762 URL: http://www.odpem.org.jm	Mr. Ronald Jackson , General Director Tel: +(876)-930-0796, Fax: +(876)-928-5503, E-mail: rjackson@odpem.org.jm

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COUNTRY	Formal launching of the process	Name/ Base Mechanism	HFA National Focal Point	Contact
Mexico	Identified in November 2009	Sistema Nacional de Protección Civil (SINAPROC)	Centro Nacional de Prevención de Desastres (CENAPRED) Tel.:+52 5556062043 Fax:+52 5556061608 http://www.cenapred.unam.mx/	Ing. Roberto Quaas Weppen; Director CENAPRED Phone:+52 5551280181/82 Fax:+52 5551280289/92 rqw@cenapred.unam.mx
Nicaragua	Identified in mid 2004	Sistema Nacional para la Prevención, Mitigación y Atención de Desastres, SINAPRED	National Institute of Territorial Studies (INETER) Tel: (505) 249-2749 / Fax: 249-1890 E-mail: ineterds@ibw.com.ni Website: http://www.ineter.gob.ni	Dr. Alejandro Rodriguez, Director Ejecutivo INETER
Panama	Identified and launched in December 2005	Plataforma Nacional de RRD (Comisión Nacional de CEPREDENAC)	Sistema Nacional de Protección Civil de Panamá (SINAPROC) Panamá, Panamá Tel:+507-316-0048/0050/0076 Fax:+507-316-0049	Arturo Alvarado De Icaza, Director General SINAPROC http://www.sinaproc.gob.pa
Peru	Launched in February 2009	Plataforma Nacional para la RRD de Perú	Instituto Nacional de Defensa Civil - INDECI Website: http://www.indeci.gob.pe	Luis Felipe Palomino Ródriguez, Major General EP. Phone: + (511) 225-9898, Fax: + (511) 225-9898 E-mail: lfpalomino@indeci.gob.pe

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COUNTRY	Formal launching of the process	Name/ Base Mechanism	HFA National Focal Point	Contact
USA	Mid 2004	Sub-Committee on Disaster Reduction (SDR)	United States Department of State Office of Human Rights, Humanitarian and Social Affairs 2201 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20520 Website of the SDR: http://www.sdr.gov/	Cari Enav, Deputy Director – Office of Human Rights, Humanitarian and Social Affairs ,Bureau of International Organiz Tel: 202-647-5070 E-mail: enavCR@state.gov
Venezuela	End of 2008	Dirección Nacional de Protección Civil y Administración de Desastres	Dirección Nacional de Protección Civil y Administración de Desastres Phone: (+58) 212-662-7671/662-3205/0800-266-8446 / Fax:(+58) 212-662-6619 Website: www.pcivil.gov.ve	Lic. Luis Díaz Curbelo, Director Nacional E-mail: lcurvelo@pcivil.gob.ve , diazcurvelo@hotmail.com