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Final Report

Regional Seminar Cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: Focus, progress and challenges

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Final Report on the Regional Seminar “Cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: Focus, progress and challenges”

*Regional Seminar “Cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction
in Latin America and the Caribbean: Focus, progress and challenges”*

*Panama City, Panama
17 and 18 November 2011
SP/SRCGSPRRD/IF-11*

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RAPPORTEUR’S REPORT

1. The Regional Seminar “Cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: Focus, progress and challenges”, organized by the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID/OFDA/LAC) and the City of Knowledge Foundation, was held on 17 and 18 November 2011 in Panama City.

2. The main objectives of this Regional Seminar were as follows: i) Analyze the approaches, progress and challenges of cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean; ii) Begin the process to identify, systematize and analyze the various mechanisms, tools, services and ways for cooperation which could be offered by the private sector to support governments in cases of disaster in Latin America and the Caribbean; iii) Relate experiences and best practices on the contribution and cooperation offered by the private sector in cases of disaster in the region, in support of the actions taken towards disaster risk reduction by governments; and iv) Recommend policy measures to improve cooperation and coordination between the private and public sectors for disaster risk reduction in the region.

3. Delegations of SELA Member States took part in the event, namely: Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay. Additionally, representatives of the following regional and international organizations took part in the event: Development Bank of Latin America (CAF); Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA); American Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Panama (AmCham); Coordination Centre for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC); Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Relief (CAPRADE); Andean Business Advisory Council (CCEA) of the Andean Community (CAN); the Caribbean Community (CARICOM); the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); Pan American Development Foundation (PADF); MERCOSUR Productive Integration Group; German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean; the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); the Specialized Meeting on Social and Natural Disaster Risk Reduction, Civil Defence, Civil Protection, and Humanitarian Assistance (REHU-MERCOSUR); the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS); the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR); the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID/OFDA/LAC); World Food Programme (WFP); the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) and the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA). Private sector participants included Blom Geo Proyectos; the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Services of Caracas; the Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (COHEP); the National Council of Private Enterprise of Panama (CONEP); DHL Disaster Response Team; Grupo Éxito from Colombia; Total Oil and Gas Venezuela. The list of participants is included in Annex V.

4. Speakers during the **Opening Ceremony** included:

a) Mr. Ricardo Mena, Head of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), said that this event is of great importance for the ISDR and was very pleased with the attendance of representatives of governments, regional and international organizations and the private sector. He particularly thanked SELA and the USAID/OFDA/SELA for organizing the event in cooperation with the ISDR and the City of Knowledge Foundation for providing the physical space for its conduction. He explained that the ISDR is working on disaster risk reduction through the promotion and implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, an international agreement that encourages governments, communities and the private sector to promote the culture of prevention and disaster management in order to minimize loss of life and economic damage caused by natural hazards and to strengthen resilience at the regional, national and local levels. He explained that disasters affect lives and livelihoods of millions of people around the world in both developed and developing countries. He referred to the earthquakes in Haiti, Chile, Japan, New Zealand, Australia and recent adverse weather conditions in Central America and Colombia, noting that no country is exempt from disasters. He said economic losses and insured property, as well as frequency and severity of catastrophes, are growing due to the combination of rapid population growth and concentration of infrastructure works and economic activities, particularly in urban areas. He noted that, according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), more than 50% of the world population lives in urban areas, and in some countries of Latin America and the Caribbean this figure rises to 70%. He added that the population will reach 89% in 2050 and the urban overcrowding will contribute to increased vulnerability of millions of people. He said that disasters affect all business sectors, both directly and indirectly. He stressed that, while the primary responsibility for risk management falls on public authorities at the national and local levels, the private sector has a key role in building resilience. He said every dollar spent on prevention saves four to seven dollars in post-disaster response, hence the importance of making prevention a public policy. He noted that many of the companies that have no business continuity strategies are much more likely to fail after a disaster compared to those that do implement these strategies. He stressed the importance of synergies between public and private sectors and made a call to action in that direction. Finally, he said the space provided for the conduction of the seminar can offer a great opportunity to generate exchanges of experiences between public and private sectors in support of disaster risk reduction.

b) Mr. Sidney Velado, Regional Advisor of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (USAID/OFDA/LAC), thanked SELA and the ISDR for organizing the event. He noted that important alliances have been established between the public and private sectors in the region, particularly in the area of disaster response. He recalled that USAID/OFDA in the past funded the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) and formed the so-called Disaster Management Alliance (DMA). Among the actions taken, he highlighted the work done in Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua and Trinidad and Tobago. In his opinion, the private sector has realized that the companies must also be resilient, and that the less they are closed the less the financial losses will be. Referring to the base document presented by SELA, he agreed that corporate social responsibility can be a win-win business. As regards business continuity, he said that this is a well-known and significant issue for the private sector, since the fact that a company continues operations after a disaster is beneficial not only for the company but also for its employees and the community. He referred to one of his missions in El Salvador as a representative of USAID/OFDA/LAC for disaster relief. A public-private partnership was established, with the DHL shipping company helping organize and distribute humanitarian supplies received from the international community, private businesses, civic organizations

and citizens of El Salvador, an initiative that was an excellent example of a win-win partnership. In addition, he referred to informal employment in the countries of the region and the vulnerability this situation may cause in the population. To reduce vulnerability and ensure that middle-income groups play a greater role in economic development, he noted that policies are needed to promote upward social mobility and include better education policies that ensure that children belonging to these groups have more secure livelihoods with a view to enhancing productivity and competitiveness across the economy as a whole. Finally, he stressed the importance of reflecting on possible business continuity plans for the informal sector.

c) Ambassador José Rivera Banuet, Permanent Secretary of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), said it has been very satisfying for SELA to co-sponsor this Regional Seminar jointly with ISDR, USAID/OFDA and the City of Knowledge Foundation and deal with a matter of such importance for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, namely disaster risk reduction. He noted that the challenges of development in the region are not the exclusive responsibility of the State. Instead, they should be the product of interaction and commitment among governments, the private sector and the civil society as a whole. He added that in the context of regional cooperation, SELA has dealt with the issue of disaster risk reduction for several years with different lenses and perspectives in order to avoid duplication and dispersion of time, efforts and resources. He explained that SELA seeks to join forces and build synergies with the various regional actors to cover complex and priority issues that require the effort and shared vision of both the public and private sectors, and this is the case of public-private partnerships for disaster risk reduction. He referred to the document prepared by the Permanent Secretariat and aimed at promoting dialogue and discussion among participants on the various approaches to this cooperation between governments and private sector. He noted that the impact of disasters in our region is evidence of the challenge of working in the area of prevention and comprehensive disaster risk management. He stressed that the Seminar is the suitable space to start a path expected to strengthen cooperation in the matter. Finally, he reiterated his gratitude to the ISDR and the USAID/OFDA/LAC and wished success to all participants during the two-day event.

d) The moderator of the Session, Antonio Romero, Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), thanked the speakers for their presentation and announced the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations through the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) to promote cooperation and coordination in the area of Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean (2011 – 2015), particularly in the area of "cooperation between governments and the private sector for Disaster Risk Reduction."

The speeches of the Opening Session are included in Annexes II, III and IV of this report.

A. CONDUCTION OF THE MEETING

5. The moderator submitted the Agenda for consideration of the delegates, who adopted it without amendments. Both the Agenda and the informative and supportive documents submitted by the Permanent Secretariat, as well as the presentations of regional and international organizations and representatives of the private sector, are available on SELA's Web site (<http://www.sela.org>).

6. **INTRODUCTORY SESSION: Presentation of the study on “Guidelines for cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction: Approaches, achievements and challenges”** (SP/SR-CGSPRRD/Di No. 4-11). This session was presented by Alejandro Linayo, President of the Disaster Risk Management Research Centre of Venezuela and SELA’s consultant, who referred to aspects being highlighted throughout the document, among which stand out the trend scenario of disasters and the challenges that must be solved, urban growth, vulnerability and the fact of changing the way the issue has been dealt with. To that end, we should stop considering disasters the focus and look at the risk as the sustainability factor with a view to better identify the areas of action required by disaster risk reduction and the way to incorporate the private sector into the work of these areas. He stressed that, according to a number of reports and documents published worldwide, it has been noted that the impact of disasters could not be reversed. In this regard, he called upon participants to reflect on that, since although many advances have been reported in this matter, some aspects seem to be shelved. He explained that the increase in vulnerability in urban areas is an aspect which should be taken into account, because the impact of disasters grows eight times the population and nearly four times the number of events. Based on these facts, the idea that more people die today because there are more people around the world or because disasters are stronger seems to lose validity. We are creating settlement and development models that increase the likelihood of such events. Therefore, making more emphasis on causes represents a challenge. He stressed that we should stop looking at disasters as the elements that lead to the development of actions and begin to consider the risk a process aimed at building conditions that make the disasters to materialize. He said that the issue of risk management is not a sectoral scope of development, but a factor of sustainability of any area of development in the region. He added that the economic development of the region must be sustainable, and to that end it is necessary to take into account the issue of disaster risk management. He stressed the importance of working on risk prevention and mitigation, preparation for response and transfer of risk to insurers and reinsurers. He stated that the participation of the private sector in disaster risk management is essential, because it guarantees somehow the sustainability of its investments. He stressed that the private sector not only has the role of supporting a third party affected by a disaster, but also of adopting some protocols to facilitate its response to disasters. As one of the possible scenarios of cooperation, he stood out the fact that the private sector can offer its inventory of products to residents after a disaster, with the prior commitment of the public sector to comply with payment for these products. He also stressed the importance of developing diagnostic studies on risk levels to ensure that the private sector takes the best decision when it comes to investing. He concluded that private cooperation has been common in regional disaster scenarios, but it is necessary to promote more efficient forms of private sector participation, making emphasis on prevention and mitigation to avoid that this participation materializes only after a disaster occurs and in a weakly coordinated way. Finally, he considered it promising to explore the possibility of linking the guilds representing the private sector with the public sector.

7. **SESSION I: International and regional initiatives for cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean.** This session was chaired by Ricardo Mena, Head of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), who gave the floor to speakers scheduled for this first working session after making a brief introduction to the topic under discussion.

8. Kiki Rebecca Lawal, Business Partnerships Programme Officer of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), made the presentation entitled “UNISDR: Regional and International Initiatives for Cooperation between governments and the private sector for DRR in LAC: Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG)” (SP/SR-

CGSPRRD/Di No. 5-11). She referred to the importance of the private sector in disaster risk reduction and the Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG), created within the framework of the ISDR and aimed at incorporating different actors of the private sector, at all levels and based on all forms of organisation, for the construction of conditions for resilience. She also referred to the members of the Private Sector Advisory Group who are supporting the ISDR since 2011. In addition, she mentioned the high economic and social costs as a result of the increase in the magnitude and frequency of disasters at the global level, presenting the recent statistical trends on loss of life and estimated damage caused by disasters. In her opinion, the private sector consider it essential to ensure its long-term investments, continuity of operations and business, investments in human, technical and financial resources for the construction of resilience and support to other social actors, especially governments in the fundamental task of saving lives and homes. All this, along with philanthropy and corporate social responsibility actions, make the private sector an unsurpassed ally for disaster risk reduction. That is why the partnership between the private sector and the ISDR allows them to provide better advice on best practices, complement views on DRR with innovative ideas and provide technical support and specialized publications, as well as funds to promote projects and actions aimed at strengthening risk management initiatives. She referred to the five aspects for DRR that are essential for business, namely: (i) promote and develop public-private partnerships; (ii) influence the private sector and use its experience to strengthen DRR and those activities designed to mitigate disasters, including resilience and response measures; (iii) promote collaboration, exchange and dissemination of data, as well as share information on assessment, follow-up, prediction, forecast and early warning; (iv) support national and local advice and socio-economic cost-benefit analysis; and (v) support the development and strengthening of national and local laws, regulations, policies and programmes to improve DRR and resilience. Among commitments and objectives of the Private Sector Advisory Group, she mentioned the following: reach the number of 1,000 companies interested in undertaking those commitments by May 2012; develop a win-win structure within the private sector for the construction of resilience and response planning; establish a strategy for resilience that considers local requirements and codes; and promote workshops on disasters and response plans for effective management of response actions. Finally, she referred to the organizational approach adopted by some members of the Private Sector Advisory Group to join the work for DRR and construction of resilience.

9. Gerard Gómez, Regional Advisor for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, made the presentation entitled "Sector Privado y Ayuda Humanitaria" (SP/SR-CGSPRRD/Di No. 6-11). He explained that when we talk about coordination, we generally refer to a wide variety of partners ranging from non-governmental organizations, international institutions, governments and private sector. He said that the common response after a disaster is solidarity, but sometimes excess of solidarity creates chaos. He acknowledged that the idea of solidarity is good, but it must be organized. As regards post-disaster humanitarian aid, he stressed the need for complementarity between what donors send and what the victims need. He pointed out that OCHA is specialized in coordination actions and has a long and important alliance with DHL, which coordinates the transportation of post-disaster humanitarian relief at airports as requested. As regards the development of policies, he stressed the importance of avoiding improvisation and assured that it is necessary for the private sector to be informed of how it can help and cooperate. He referred to Global Compact, an initiative of the United Nations that provides mechanisms to improve the relationship between the private sector and the United Nations system. He also referred to business contribution, whose principles are based on the best use of competencies of each actor, because the objective is not only

to distribute products, but also to interconnect all actors and ensure that the needs are met according to the geographical and cultural characteristics. Finally, he said that capacity building means not only to make donations of supplies, but to carry out studies and training plans that can improve both mitigation and prevention plans and response plans.

10. Dana Van Alphen, Regional Preparedness and Response Advisor of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), made the presentation entitled "Hospitales seguros: Cooperación con el sector privado" (SP/SR-CGSPRRD/Di No. 7-11). She stressed that most hospitals are built by the private sector and depend on other critical services, such as power, communication, water, among others, which may also be provided by companies of the private sector. She added that most of the hospital budget is spent in operation and very little in maintenance and over 12,000 hospitals in Latin America and the Caribbean are located in areas of disaster risk. In addition, she mentioned the cessation of operation of hospitals and the economic and social costs that it represents for countries, especially the suspension of care services that are critical in certain situations, such as those taking place after a natural disaster. She said that this social impact encouraged PAHO to launch the campaign "Safe hospitals in the Americas," which was included as a priority in the 2005 Hyogo Action Plan. In this connection, the countries adopted the following actions: (i) Consider the topic of "safe hospitals in disasters" a national policy for risk reduction; (ii) meet the goal for all new hospitals to be built with a level of protection that best ensures its ability to continue operating in disaster situations; and (iii) implement adequate mitigation measures to strengthen existing health facilities, especially those that provide primary care. As regards the private sector, she referred to the establishment of the Disaster Mitigation Advisory Group (DiMAG) within the framework of PAHO, made up of professional associations of engineers and architects and construction companies, with the objective of advising the Ministries of Health, donors and private companies on best practices and risk reduction in new hospitals; the development of technical materials and post-disaster vulnerability standards and analyses; and the Hospital Safety Index, which is a mathematical model for evaluating structural, non-structural and functional aspects. She pointed out that 29 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are using the Hospital Safety Index and added that, according to an assessment of 419 hospitals, the safety level is high in 14% of them, medium in 49% and low in 37%. Based on that safety index, 21% of assessed hospitals require urgent measures, since they were considered unlikely to protect the lives of patients and health personnel during and after a disaster. Among the challenges to be faced are the fact that the transfer of risk through insurance companies is not feasible, since most hospitals have a State insurance policy or are not insured at all, and the need to promote the private sector support for the independent evaluation of the design of new hospitals. Hence the need to continue strengthening cooperation in the areas of health, training of human resources for emergencies and partnerships between public and private hospitals.

11. Paul Fisher, Director of Corporate Partnerships and Development with the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), made the presentation "Natural Disasters in the Caribbean: Public and Private Initiatives, results and challenges for disaster mitigation" (SP/SR-CGSPRRD/Di No. 8-11). He referred to the PADF, its origins, objectives and programmes developed in various Latin American and Caribbean countries with the participation of the private sector. He explained that the PADF was created in 1962 to promote economic and social development, integrate the private sector into development and boost projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. As regards disaster risk reduction, the PADF established the Disaster Management Alliance (DMA), which has been implemented in several countries in the region. Then he explained the role of the DMA, which inter alia focuses on multisectoral integration in all phases of risk

management and disaster reduction, identifying existing resources and directing them towards priority areas, exchanging successful experiences and best practices, strengthening local, national and regional authorities through public-private partnerships, promoting installed capacities, unifying standards, training and technical support, among others. In addition, he explained the benefits provided by the DMA to the private sector in terms of corporate social responsibility, taxes, risk reduction, continuity of business and operations, construction of resilience, among others. He also referred to the work carried out within the framework of the DMA during the period 2004-2010 and the support provided by USAID-OFDA-LAC. He explained the projects developed in Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti, Jamaica, and finally commented on the achievements and successful experiences that have been implemented in the Caribbean in the field of disaster mitigation.

12. The moderator thanked the speakers for their presentations and invited delegates to comment on them.

13. The delegate from Costa Rica thanked the speakers for their interesting presentations. He stressed the importance of preparation before disasters and acknowledged the role of both governments and the private sector in disaster response. In his opinion, it is important that the response is given not only as humanitarian aid but also as the restitution of economic activity after the disaster. He referred to the presentation of the OCHA, in particular the importance for the private sector to work in a coordinated manner, depending on the needs of the victims. He stressed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica has developed a guide that explains what to do and how to participate in humanitarian assistance in cases of emergency, allowing aid to flow in an organized and coordinated manner.

14. The delegation of Argentina congratulated all the speakers for their presentations. They referred to the presentation by the representative of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and asked if the five points that were agreed upon in May during the Meeting of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva are already available in Spanish. They also referred to the presentation by the representative of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and stressed that the construction of a hospital that meets the parameters of the hospital safety index is very expensive and that many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean do not have the resources to comply with these security measures in the construction of buildings.

15. The representative of the ISDR said that, although the countries in the region often do not have enough funds to invest in secure buildings, most of the time the cheapest is not more profitable for a State. It is common to see in the region that there is no money to build a secure hospital, but there is money to rebuild the same hospital after a disaster. In his opinion, it is better and more cost-effective to prevent the occurrence of a disaster through the construction of secure buildings. Otherwise a cycle of vulnerability would be created.

16. In response to the remarks of the delegation of Argentina, the representative of the PAHO said that mitigation measures in a safe hospital represent approximately 1% of the total investment. She explained that in our region a hospital bed costs approximately US\$ 120,000. If we take 1% of that amount, which is the cost of mitigation measures, and 30% of the cost of the reconstruction of the hospital after a disaster, we will notice that the cost of preventing and building a safe hospital is really beneficial.

17. The representative of Jamaica, who took part in representation of the CDEMA and CARICOM, shared an important national experience. He explained that a group of

engineers from the private sector met and promoted the revision of the national building code, which is a clear example of cooperation between the private and public sectors to ensure the safety of buildings and avoid cycles of vulnerability. He said that most private enterprises adopt a response approach instead of prevention measures. Referring to the presentations by the representatives of the PAHO and the PADF, who spoke about mitigation, he asked how to make private companies change the paradigm and adopt a prevention and mitigation approach.

18. The representative of the PADF said the private sector is evolving in terms of corporate social responsibility, and every day more companies are willing to invest in prevention and mitigation. However, he stressed that, in view of the dynamics of developments, companies are always forced to save an important part of their resources for response measures in cases of disasters.

19. The representative of the PAHO, referring to safe hospitals with mitigation and prevention measures, noted that it is important to take into account that the average term of a Minister in any Ministry of Latin America and the Caribbean is 5 years, while the useful life of a hospital is 50 years or more. So it is important to make the best decisions when investing.

20. The delegate of Haiti thanked the organizers of the event for the invitation and the speakers for their presentations. She explained that since 2005 a number of reports were spread out about the warning of an earthquake in her country, but unfortunately the necessary measures were not taken and the disaster of the year 2010 reminded them of the importance of prevention. She said that, in terms of coordination, the OCHA should work hand in hand with non-governmental organizations. She explained that during the earthquake there was a great deal of cooperation and solidarity, but most of it was focused on the capital. She stressed the importance of developing protocols to determine who does what. She pointed out that the private sector responds very well to disasters, but it seems to need to strengthen prevention and mitigation.

21. The representative of the OCHA, in response to the remarks by the delegate of Haiti, said that although the international community has been criticized for the lack of coordination after the earthquake, the level of destruction was so high and the lack of leadership was so marked that work under those conditions was really difficult. Finally, he stressed the importance of establishing alliances with the private sector in the area of prevention.

22. The representative of the ISDR said many actors of the private sector want to do something to help, but often do not know where to start. So he stressed the importance of focusing on prevention and mitigation.

23. The representative of the PAHO said that the new building code, developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works of Haiti, will be ready by December 2011. She also stressed that an appendix to this building code is expected to be developed with the Ministry of Health of that country and focused specifically on safe hospitals.

24. The representative of the PADF referred to the remarks by the delegate of Haiti, and stressed that the organization he represents has been present in Haiti for more than 20 years. He added that the programme being developed by PADF in Haiti has a budget of approximately US\$ 50 million annually. In his opinion, the experience with the private sector has been good, and acknowledged that it has been easy for the private and public sectors to work together.

25. The delegate of the Dominican Republic referred to the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, and recalled that both the public and private sectors of his country offered voluntarily their help and solidarity. He also recalled that borders hospitals were open to assist our brothers in Haiti.

26. The representative of the PAHO acknowledged that the first aid provided to Haiti after the earthquake was precisely the help of neighbouring Dominican Republic. As regards the construction of safe hospitals, she stressed the importance that the respective authorities coordinate with engineers and contractors and follow up the development of works.

27. In response to the remarks about Haiti, the consultant of SELA considered that not all aid offered after the earthquake has been criticized. He said that the next Summit of the Americas, to be held in Cartagena in March 2012, includes for the first time the issue of disaster risk reduction. In addition, he stressed that a number of documents and reports prepared for this Summit suggest that, within the first days after the earthquake in Haiti, 62 organizations offered their assistance and over 1,800 volunteers rescued 132 people. Thus he called for a more efficient work with fewer resources.

28. The representative of the OCHA, referring to the remarks by SELA's consultant, said that saving lives is the work of humanitarian assistance and response institutions. Based on previous experiences, we should learn lessons and make greater emphasis on prevention and mitigation. He recalled that no country can escape from, since even developed countries such as Japan may, at some point, need humanitarian aid.

29. The representative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies thanked for the invitation to the event. He said that when speaking about this theme, it is more convenient to analyze what was done and what should be done, considering the results. What was not done has a lot to do with risk management, urban planning and development, among others, while what needs to be done are the consequences of what was not done. He said that the most important thing is the dignity of the victims after a disaster. In this regard, rescuing a life is a priceless action. Finally, he stressed the importance of creating conditions for response and strengthening local responses.

30. The representative of Dominican Republic pointed out that in the field of construction of hospitals many countries do not have sufficient resources for these projects, and asked SELA's consultant what to do with the large migration from the countryside to the cities, resulting in an overpopulation in very critical and vulnerable areas, generally near the course of rivers and creeks in most Latin American and Caribbean countries.

31. The representative of Haiti said that her intention was not to minimize the very important assistance provided by the international community to her country after the disaster. As one of the lessons learned, she stressed the need to work on post-disaster coordination and leadership.

32. The representative of the Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (COHEP) noted that the main responsibility for a disaster falls on the public sector and the role of the private sector is to contribute to these efforts. He added that the fundamental role of business is to survive, and it survives only if it has profits. He recalled that micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Latin America and the Caribbean represent 95% of wealth and employment creation in the region.

33. Antonio Romero, Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), recalled that SELA is an intergovernmental organization made up of Latin American and Caribbean governments, who adopt the annual work programme of the institution. He agreed that the responsibility for disaster risk reduction falls primarily on the State, and recognized that the private sector can provide extraordinary cooperation and support in coordination with governments. He finally recalled that SELA and most international organizations attending the event are intergovernmental bodies that serve as catalysts for decisions taken by governments.

34. The moderator thanked the delegates and participants for their remarks during the debate.

35. **SESSION II: Subregional cooperation initiatives between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean.** This session was chaired by Antonio Romero, Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), who gave the floor to speakers scheduled for this session according to the agenda after introducing the topic under discussion.

36. The Caribbean experience was presented by Ronald Jackson, Director-General of the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) of Jamaica and representative of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), who made the presentation entitled "Subregional Cooperation Initiatives between Governments and the Private Sector for Disaster Risk Reduction in LAC" (SP/SR-CGSPRRD/Di No. 9-11). After thanking the organizers of the event for the invitation and for providing the CDEMA a space to share its experiences, he noted that the Caribbean region is vulnerable to disasters and that the CDEMA was created in 1991, by mandate of the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of CARICOM, precisely to deal with this problem. He explained that the change in the name of the agency in the year 2009 was the result of a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to risk management that promotes the incorporation of other actors, such as the private sector, civil society, the academic sector, among others. He stressed that the CDEMA membership increased from 16 to 18 Member States, including Haiti and Suriname. He added that there are four subregional groups that coordinate the actions and that those groups are represented by Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda and Barbados. He reiterated that the Caribbean region is very prone to both natural and anthropic disasters, and that climate change affects the frequency and severity of hydrometeorological phenomena. An increase in disasters has been reported in the past two decades. He recalled that the climate change should be addressed with special attention, since most Caribbean States are of limited land size and high population density. It means that in cases of disasters losses are so high that some territories could eventually disappear, causing the displacement of millions of people and the loss of millions of dollars spent on the tourism sector. He said disaster risk management must be redefined and considered a factor for development. He recalled that 50% of companies that suffer losses after a disaster have no capacity to resume their operations. Hence the importance for private companies to participate in plans for risk prevention and mitigation, business continuity and continuity of operations. He explained that the disasters we have experienced in recent years have been the result of decisions taken in the past. Similarly, the decisions we take today will affect the disaster risk in the coming years. He assured that the subregional strategy for DRR focuses on the promotion of public-private partnerships, sensitization of communities to increase the knowledge about the subject and increase in capacities of all actors involved.

37. The South American experience was presented by Raquel Piaggio, Director of the Environmental Unit of the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining of Uruguay and representative of the Productive Integration Group of MERCOSUR, who made the presentation entitled "Grupo de Integración Productiva del MERCOSUR y la cooperación entre Gobiernos y sector privado para la reducción de desastres" (SP/SR-CGSPRRD/Di No. 10-11). She started her presentation by recalling the words of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki Moon, on the occasion of the International Day for DRR: "They (the Ten Essentials) recommend that governments assign a budget to serve everyone – rich and poor alike – and that they invest in risk assessment, training on disaster risk reduction, ecosystem protection, and early warning systems". She explained that since the Ibero-American Virtual Conference in April 2011, the preventive culture was established as a resilience factor against disasters. She added that resilience is the process of generating improvements and strengths that promote prevention and increase the capacity to respond to disasters, as well as the resistance and the ability to cope with the damage suffered and the subsequent recovery. She stressed that to achieve a preventive culture, it is necessary to develop social networks that encourage the support and social cohesion, innovation in management of social and natural resources and the analysis of risks, activities for the preparation of response and implementation of preventive programmes especially aimed at the most vulnerable population. As regards the phenomenon of climate change, she said this is the greatest threat the human species should overcome to survive. In this regard, Uruguay has decided to adopt the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. In 2010, the National Plan on Climate Change (PNRCC) was approved to incorporate climate change into the long-term sustained development strategy of Uruguay. She explained that the PNRCC makes special emphasis on the industrial and service sector, since an eventual disaster could generate impacts on industrial facilities and infrastructure, as well as on transport infrastructure, with the subsequent disruption of supplies for production. In this regard, she stressed that the PNRCC is prone to a national comprehensive strategy with an emphasis on critical aspects that require adjustments and whose results are multivariate, affecting and benefitting several sectors at the same time, while considering the particularities of each sector individually. She explained that in order to achieve the Productive Development Strategy in Uruguay, since 2005 efforts have been made to reduce fiscal, financial and social vulnerabilities. Finally, she noted that in 2010 Productive Sector Councils were created to seek a tripartite integration of workers, employers and the government with a view to achieving the success of operations.

38. Another South American experience was the Specialized Meeting on Socio-Natural Disaster Risk Reduction, Civil Defence, Civil Protection and Humanitarian Assistance (REHU-MERCOSUR), which was presented by Rodolfo Costas, Acting Director of the National Emergencies System of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay and representative of the Pro Tempore Presidency of REHU. He made a presentation entitled "REHU-MERCOSUR: Iniciativas para la cooperación entre gobiernos y el sector privado para la RRD" (SP/SR-CGSPRRD/Di No. 11-11), which referred to the socio-economic information that influences disaster risk management in the countries of MERCOSUR. He also analyzed vulnerabilities, types and risks to which the countries of the subregion are subject. He reiterated that disasters are the result of public and private social and institutional conditions, which daily increase the exposure levels of different populations to these adverse events. He referred to the important role that the private sector plays and can play, beyond the traditional action of solidarity and support in cases of disasters. In this regard, he stressed the importance of corporate social responsibility as a concept that has been promoted to encourage the commitment of the private sector to the social and institutional development of its environment. Quoting the United Nations, he said that "the social

responsibility of the private sector goes beyond the sector's day-to-day operations of producing a certain range of products and services in the most efficient and economic manner. The social responsibility of the private sector (also referred to as corporate social responsibility) concerns the relationships of a company not just with its clients but also with other groups, and with the needs, values and goals of the society in which it operates." Afterwards, he presented some best practices being developed in MERCOSUR countries, particularly in Uruguay, where the enactment of the Law 18.621 establishes a National Emergency System, a public mechanism to operate through the joint coordination of actions with the private sector in an efficient and effective manner, under the principle of shared and differentiated responsibilities. He also analyzed the case of Argentina, particularly the Association of Transporters of Hazardous Materials, which in collaboration with the National Directorate of Civil Protection has developed the Transport Emergency Information Centre (C.I.P.E.T.), with 80% funded by the private sector. He also mentioned the Risk Identification and Management in Critical Infrastructure Group, which includes the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Defence and Security, the Nuclear Regulatory Authority, the Communications Commission, the Secretary of Energy, and private operators of every sector, whose mission is to develop policies and actions for risk reduction in key sectors. In addition, he referred to best practices being implemented in the area of donations from the private sector, as well as to initiatives in the area of insurance against disasters. Finally, he mentioned the future challenges and some conclusions about the need to promote the discussion of the topic of partnerships between public and private sectors from a trade-union and multi-sectoral approach with a view to strengthening cooperation and coordination between governments and the private sector.

39. The Andean experience was presented by Diana Catalina Torres, International Cooperation Advisor of the Risk Management Office of Colombia and representative of the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Relief (CAPRADE). She made the presentation entitled "CAPRADE: incorporación del sector privado en la gestión de riesgo" (SP/SR- CGSPRRD/Di No. 12-11), in which she detailed the background, mission, objectives and establishment of the CAPRADE, as well as its organization and main policies. She referred to the Andean Strategy for Disaster Prevention and Relief (EAPAD) and to the different central themes that are developed under the coordination of the member countries of the CAPRADE. She noted the common features of the risks to which the Andean region is subject and the increase in vulnerabilities as a result of the inappropriate use of resources, poor productive practices, inadequate settlement and territorial development processes and high levels of poverty, socio-economic exclusion, and environmental degradation. As regards the incorporation of the private sector into the CAPRADE, she said it has been evidenced mainly in the following areas: i) construction of housing and infrastructure with the inclusion of the risk variable in pre-feasibility, feasibility, development and execution analyses; (ii) the development and implementation of building codes by the private sector; (iii) in the public services sector, the design of infrastructure and development of contingency plans to ensure the service, especially drinking water; and (iv) in the agricultural and livestock sector, the use of insurance and reinsurance instruments. She concluded that: i) risk management should be included in the work of all government ministries and private institutions, in order to facilitate the operation of government agencies before, during and after emergencies; (ii) planning, land use and environmental management linked to risk management should be handled thoroughly and taking into the account the adverse natural phenomena generated by climate change; and (iii) governments must have the necessary resources for the development of risk management according to the vulnerability (earthquakes, landslides, floods, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, tsunamis). Finally, she recalled that "investing in prevention is the best business."

40. Juan Camilo Nariño, Vice President of Foreign Trade of the National Association of Industrialists of Colombia, representing the Andean Business Advisory Council (CCEA) of the Andean Community (CAN), made the presentation entitled "ANDI: Cooperación entre Gobiernos y Sector Privado para la Reducción del Riesgo de Desastres" (SP/SR-CGSPRRD/Di No. 13-11). He explained that the ANDI brings together more than 1,300 companies, which represent about 45% of Colombia's GDP. He stressed that there is a huge opportunity for private business associations to work together with governments. He acknowledged that today economies of Latin America and the Caribbean have changed a lot and are being taken into account in the world. He referred to the case of Colombia, which in the year 2000 had a per capita GDP of about 2,400 dollars, and today, 10 years later, this figure has reached close to 6,000 dollars. He said that international reserves went from US\$ 9 billion to US\$ 32 billion during the same period, and this regional dynamics has led to the strengthening of a more dynamic private sector, which is in constant interconnection with the world. In view of recent disasters occurred in the region, he acknowledged that it is essential to think about disaster risk mitigation and reduction, and that companies can play an important role in spreading the prevention message to employees on how to act in cases of disasters. He stressed the importance of taking into account the risk factors and appropriate security measures to build hospitals, schools and roads, and recognized the need to consider the issue of climate change. As regards response actions by the private sector, he stressed the importance of creating an inventory of services offered by different companies to put them at the disposal of the neediest, and said that the private sector has many resources to provide and often is not informed of the opportunities to participate through assistance. He explained that the involvement of the private sector could result in the best use of resources through auditing and transparency. Finally, as a means to improve coordination, he asked the organizers of this Seminar, especially SELA, to continue such initiatives and organize an event with the Latin American Association of Industrialists. He claimed that there is an enormous willingness to collaborate, and efforts should be made to pave the way to initiate cooperation.

41. The Central American experience was analyzed by René Iván Morales, Executive Secretary of the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC). He made a presentation entitled "CEPREDENAC: Construcción e Implementación de la Política Centroamericana de Gestión Integral de Riesgo a Desastres" (SP/SR-CGSPRRD/Di No. 14-11), which referred to the organizational structure of CEPREDENAC, its origins and guiding principles, as well as its legal framework for action. In addition, he analyzed the evolution of the Central American Policy for Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management (PCGIR), particularly from 1999 to 2009, as well as its main focal points and political agreements adopted at presidential level within the framework of SICA Presidential Summits. Afterwards, he explained in detail the six strategic products of CEPREDENAC: i) regional mechanisms for mutual disaster relief; (ii) strengthening of national institutions; (iii) regional information and communication platform; (iv) the Advisory Forum of the PCGIR; (v) the Central American Fund Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management (FOCEGIR); and (vi) risk reduction in public investment.

42. The moderator thanked speakers for their presentations and invited participants to hold a debate on the subject.

43. The delegate of Peru thanked the organizers, particularly SELA, for the conduction of the event. He echoed the appeal for an active participation of the private sector and recognized the importance of giving it more space so that it is part of the processes of transparency and accountability of governments. He stressed the need for international organizations to increase the dissemination of strategies that have been implemented in

the area of DRR and to promote cooperation so that the private sector can work hand in hand with the public sector.

44. The representative of the ISDR welcomed the proposal made by the representative of the National Association of industrialists of Colombia to discuss the issue of the public-private partnership with the Latin American Association of industrialists. He recommended that all participants build bridges in their countries with all the relevant institutions to strengthen such partnerships.

45. The representative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) noted that voluntary work is of vital importance when it comes to make a difference in the area of DRR. He stressed that the IFRC worked with the Andean Community on the role of volunteerism, and there has been an important synergy in El Salvador, where an agreement has been reached with private companies that allow employees to provide voluntary service in cases of disasters.

46. The representative of the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) stressed the importance of prevention and the need to focus on mitigation and urban planning.

47. The representative of SELA stressed the importance of the “Forum on Cooperation and Coordination of Subregional Mechanisms for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas” as a space for technical cooperation and coordination with a view to exchanging knowledge and experiences on disaster risk management and contributing to strengthening existing regional and subregional mechanisms and platforms. He reiterated that SELA works as a catalyst to bring together regional institutions and promote cooperation on an issue of such significance and regional impact as disaster risk reduction.

48. The representative of ANDI assured that business organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean may become catalysts of this message, and stressed the importance of analyzing the risks to be faced in the future if necessary measures are not taken. He added that companies can catalyze investment strategies at the global level in the field of disaster risk reduction.

49. The moderator thanked the delegates for their remarks during the debate and closed the first day of the seminar.

50. **SESSION III: The private sector and disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: Cooperation initiatives with the public sector. Panel with private sector representatives.** This session was chaired by Fabián Arellano, Technical Manager of the Regional Disaster Assistance Programme (RDAP) of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID/OFDA/LAC), who after making a brief introduction to the topic gave the floor to the speakers.

51. Diana Vilera, Sustainable Development Manager of Total Oil and Gas Venezuela, made the presentation entitled “Gestión de Riesgos y RSE en Total Oil and Gas Venezuela” (SP/SR-CGSPRRD/Di No. 15-11). She explained that, at present, the French oil company Total is among the first five energy groups with more than 150,000 employees. She stressed that Total has worked in Venezuela for more than 30 years. She noted that in 2002 it joined the Global Compact and in 2005 it signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to promote sustainable local human development in Venezuelan communities. She said the objective of this agreement is to provide the people and their communities with greater

opportunities to develop through the expansion of their capacities to manage resources in order to obtain a sustainable and equitably distributed development for an improvement in their quality of life. She stressed that risk management should be a comprehensive and cross-cutting action involving not only governments but the private sector, academia, civil society and individuals. In this regard, she underscored the support that Total Oil and Gas Venezuela has given to the Disaster Risk Management Research Centre (CIGIR), a non-profit foundation created in 2007 to serve as a space for promotion and support to research projects aimed at pursuing and consolidating institutional and socially risk management mechanisms based on the Latin American and Venezuelan reality. Among the accomplishments of this alliance with the CIGIR is the establishment of the first Master's Degree on Socio-Natural Risk Management in the country, as well as two Diplomas aimed at teachers and municipal officials in virtual platform and 310 benefited scholars, distributed in the various training programmes in risk management. In addition, she stressed the support given by the company to the creation of a documentation centre, with a collection of nearly 800 numbers including reports, books, theses, multimedia CDs, and videos, at the disposal of researchers, teachers, students and the general public. She said the ultimate goal is that the information is available to all people interested in the subject. She also referred to the microzoning map of the Mayor's Office of the Municipality of Chacao, a town in the Venezuelan capital, which includes more light in risk areas of this important financial and urban centre. She also referred to the investment made for the preparation of hydrographic maps in Caracas. She said the company is constantly developing training plans for squads prepared by local experts, and emphasized that they are constantly working on business continuity plans, which are reviewed by national experts. Finally, she stressed the importance of involving all partners, i.e. local governments, NGOs, academia and families of employees, in the subject of risk management.

52. Jorge Augusto Rodríguez, representative of the DHL Disaster Response Team, delivered a presentation entitled "Disaster Response Team – Humanitarian Help Logistics" (SP/SR-CGSPRRD/Di No. 16-11). After thanking the organizers for the invitation, Rodríguez explained that DHL's initiative in the area of disasters is a joint effort by all employees of the company and its Board of Directors. He noted that the corporate social responsibility of the company, which started operations in Germany, adopted the disaster relief initiative "*Go Help*", in charge of a disaster response team. In case of a disaster, DHL, in collaboration with OCHA, offers its energy, talent and experience to coordinate and distribute humanitarian aid reaching airports. He noted that there are two types of disasters: natural disasters and those that originate in ports and airports because of the lack of coordination that prevents aid from reaching its destination. Rodríguez highlighted recent experiences in providing such collaboration during the earthquakes in Chile and Haiti, as well as the floods in Central America. Rodríguez said that DHL activates its collaboration services through its alliance with OCHA y the various requests made by affected countries. He pointed out that the company has implemented a cooperation agreement with the Government of Guatemala, whereby, in case of a disaster, the government itself coordinates directly with the company without having to wait for OCHA intermediation. He stressed that the logistics support lent by DHL is totally free of charge and the company does not expect any type of reward for it because its ultimate intention is to show solidarity in case of disasters. The headquarters of DHL operations in the Americas is located in Panama, however, he said, the company recently opened additional offices in El Salvador and Chile in order to increase the presence of workers and ensure efficiency of response to disasters. He said that since the beginning of this initiative, the company has been requested help on 20 occasions to efficiently coordinate humanitarian assistance. He reiterated that DHL has signed bilateral agreements with various countries upon direct requests by those States. To achieve efficiency of this

service, he said, DHL provides the best possible training to its volunteer workers. Finally, he reiterated that the company is ready to provide assistance in the region whenever necessary.

53. Diego Moreno, Risk Management National Chief of the Grupo Éxito, delivered a presentation entitled “Grupo Éxito: An experience of private enterprise with authorities, institutions and communities in Colombia” (SP/SR-CGSPRRD/Di No. 17-11). Moreno thanked the organizers of the event for the opportunity to present his experiences. He explained that Grupo Éxito is a chain of stores that started operations more than 60 years ago. At present, it has over 330 stores in Colombia and it is the private enterprise that generates more jobs in that country. Until 2008, he said, Grupo Éxito did not have a risk management unit. But it was forced to create one in 2007, when a fire in one of its merchandise distribution centres – the largest in Latin America – wreaked havoc on the company and left many people unemployed. Moreno explained that the cause of this accident was the burning of an incandescent globe – a makeshift toy that rises into the air fuelled by the combustion of a fireball ignited by a wick that can burn for up to two hours before extinguishing. He recalled that in the wake of such losses, in 2008, the Group adopted the USAID-OFDA-LAC methodology as a guiding tool for training in prevention, risk management and response to incidents in general. In 2010, the group implemented internal processes based on the training standardized by USAID-OFDA-LAC and other international models, such as that of the BA School, Devon, United Kingdom. He explained that the first decision was to create a Direction for Resource Protection with a risk management department, to adopt the Incident Command System as a national standard and start the assistance program for employees that are victims of disasters. He said that the Department of Antioquia is one of the most vulnerable regions to fire in Colombia, because the indiscriminate use of fireworks and incandescent balloons is very common there. Consequently, it was regarded as a region that requires greater attention, and a campaign was started to raise awareness among the population and reduce the indiscriminate use of incandescent devices. As a result of the campaign, the use of such balloons was reduced by 30% between 2008 and 2010. Moreno recalled that one of the most important activities undertaken by Grupo Éxito has been teaching the community about the importance of risk management. In this regard, the Group began to work with the children of its employees and customers by creating fire prevention mini-brigades and raising awareness since a very early age.

54. Philip Verges, founder of the Small Equity Initiative and representative of the UNISDR Private Sector Advisory Group, made a presentation entitled “Small Equity Initiative” (SP/SR- CGSPRRD/Di No. 18-11). Verges pointed out that Disaster Risk Reduction initiatives in small and medium-sized enterprises are often underestimated. He noted that instead of responding to disasters, we should rather prepare ourselves to prevent and mitigate such disasters, and cited the examples of the earthquakes in Chile and Haiti. He commented that the resources invested in risk management do not only result in money savings but also in more skilled personnel and energy savings. Verges recognized the importance of the ISDR campaign on Resilient Cities because it somehow contributes to preparedness and disaster mitigation. He explained a disaster not only affects companies that have to close their doors, but also the ability of individuals to consume, and that the challenge is to ensure that these victims, who not only lose their homes but also their jobs and their ability to acquire goods can recover their living standards. He said there are many opportunities to create resilience by working with the private sector, governments, NGOs and UN agencies. He urged participants to join the Private Sector Partnership of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction of the United Nations (ISDR) in order to make progress with this regional and international dialogue. Finally, he said that there are great benefits for all parties in addressing this issue on a broader basis, and hence the importance of the Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG) of the ISDR.

55. Victor Maldonado, Executive Director of the Chamber of Trade, Industry and Services of Caracas, delivered a presentation entitled "Chamber of Trade, Industry and Services of Caracas: The private sector's role in risk management (SP/SR-CGSPRRD/Di No. 19-11). First, he thanked the organizers for giving him the chance to participate in this important regional meeting. He said that calamities are disasters caused by human actions and that they can be avoided or prevented. He noted that in many Latin American countries – particularly Venezuela – most of the high-risk areas are the result of urban improvisation, poor territorial planning and lack of coordination among authorities governing risk management. Maldonado said that this situation is compounded by the vulnerabilities of a very large informal sector. He noted that, in Venezuela, there are more than 1.2 million unemployed people and a housing deficit of more than two million homes, which leads people to continue building makeshift houses in high-risk areas. He said that in order to put an end to this situation it is necessary to strike a new partnership between the public and private sectors so as to address our country risk classification as a public good that must be improved. He stressed that without enterprises there is no possibility of finding a viable solution to problems, and much less without the leading role of the government. With regard to building standards for infrastructure in Venezuela, Maldonado said that it is imperative to ensure a more harmonious relationship between costs and results. He referred to the floods of 1999 in Vargas State – one of the worst disasters in Venezuelan history – saying that a National Commission was set up to address the emergency, and that the following lessons were learned: 1) One cannot improvise; 2) There are no miraculous solutions; 3) People feel the impacts of disasters in many areas, but not all, 4) Enterprises need to ensure "some normality" as regards labour, supplies and logistics; 5) There will always be people who would want to take advantage of a disaster situation, by looting or simulating personal tragedies; 6) Official information is crucial; 7) Private sector collaboration – in the areas of ICTs, mobile communications and logistics, among others – is indispensable; 8) International cooperation is important but it requires ability to manage complex aspects; 9) Human rights of vulnerable groups are easily affected; 10) It is essential to ensure public order; and 11) Disaster prevention entails allocating budgetary resources and having response procedures. Finally, Maldonado recalled that the key for a public-private partnership is social trust, adding that the State and the private sector are crucial in order to build social order and prosperity, ensure a better future, face the vagaries of fortune and overcome weaknesses.

56. Once the speakers concluded their presentations, the moderator gave the floor to other participants.

57. The representative of the Alliance pour la Gestion des Risques et la Continuité des Activités (AGERCA) in Haiti said that her organization represented 15 private enterprises, and in this regard, she asked if, in order to form part of the Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG) of the ISDR, it was necessary to enrol those 15 companies individually or just their governing body.

58. The representative of the ISDR said that his organization has taken note of the various speeches and presentations, and on that basis, it will make a proposal to inform the entire region about the documents, initiatives and plans underway to create a Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG) for Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to address the region's needs.

59. The representative of CAF-Development Bank of Latin America said that CAF has maintained relations with USAID-OFDA-LAC and SELA for several years, and now, as a Development Bank, is also devoted to emergency relief and strengthening national institutions. He emphasized the importance of furthering such initiatives and taking concrete actions.

60. The IFRC representative referred to the experiences of Total Oil and Gas Venezuela and Colombia's Grupo Éxito, and asked them whether they had considered the possibility of outlining prevention and mitigation plans that can be eventually managed by the communities.

61. The representative of Total Oil and Gas Venezuela said that the company's efforts are aimed at providing long-term training to communities. She added, however, that it is not enough to forge basic alliances with local governors or mayors, but that it is necessary to create the conditions for local partners within the communities to further efforts and pass on their knowledge to future community leaders. She also underscored the importance of ensuring the support of the academic sector to these initiatives.

62. The representative of Colombia's Grupo Éxito noted that the group's efforts initially focused on response to disasters; but later on, as it got a better understanding of risk management, the group began to work in the areas of mitigation and preparedness.

63. The representative of USAID-OFDA-LAC said that its approach now focuses on capacity building in each one of the countries so that they can continue training and create a regional knowledge network. He also underscored the importance of South-South Cooperation as a result of sharing best practices among countries that have already achieved a certain degree of training in disaster risk reduction.

64. The moderator thanked participants for their valuable comments.

65. SESSION IV: The private sector and disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: Cooperation initiatives with the public sector. Panel with representatives of the authorities of the national systems for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean. This session was moderated by Ricardo Mena, Head of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR). After explaining the work methodology for this session, he gave the floor to the government representatives of the Member States of SELA.

66. The first speaker was the delegate from Barbados, who thanked organizers for inviting her to participate in the event. She said that she would discuss the issue of cooperation between public and private sectors with the chambers of commerce of her country and throughout the Caribbean region in order to help draw attention to the subject.

67. The delegate of Paraguay thanked for the invitation and explained that the National Emergency Secretariat of her country does not have much experience in the area of cooperation with the private sector. In this connection, she asked if there was any type of fiscal incentive to promote Corporate Social Responsibility in Latin American and Caribbean countries.

68. Responding to the representative of Paraguay, SELA's consultant explained that legislations vary from country to country, but many of them provide for fiscal incentives to those enterprises that increase their Corporate Social Responsibility, such as tax exemptions and other mechanisms.

69. The representative of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) underscored the importance of incorporating local governments to this type of meetings in order to enhance their knowledge about disaster risk reduction, in view of their key role in granting construction permits.

70. The moderator thanked participants for their presentations and gave the floor to the Permanent Secretariat of SELA.

71. SESSION V: Conclusions and recommendations. This session was moderated by Antonio Romero, Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA). Before reading the proposed conclusions and recommendations of the Seminar, Romero noted that they were not binding and were only aimed at summarizing the agreements reached on the subject.

72. As a result of the presentations and debates during the Seminar, the delegations of the Member States of SELA adopted the following Conclusions and Recommendations:

B. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Regional Seminar on "Cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: Focus, progress and challenges", organized by the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), jointly with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the City of Knowledge Foundation, was held on 17 and 18 November 2011 in Panama City.

2. Participants took note of the base document submitted by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, entitled "Guidelines for cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction: Approaches, achievements and challenges" (SP/SR- CGSPRRD/DNo.2-11), and thanked for the presentations delivered by the authorities of the national systems for disaster risk reduction, the delegates of regional, subregional and international organizations specialized in the subject, and the private sector representatives taking part in the event.

3. They also took note with satisfaction of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) and the United Nations, through the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), with the purpose of promoting cooperation and coordination in the area of disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean for the period 2011-2015, specifically aimed at fostering cooperation projects between governments and the private sector.

4. The exchanges of views and debates on cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean highlighted the following aspects:

- a. Participants recognized the need to make further progress towards perfecting a comprehensive, prospective, well-coordinated and sustainable approach to disaster risk reduction in our countries, under the leadership of governments and with an active participation of the private sector in such strategies.
- b. Participants agreed that even though State and government institutions primarily have the greatest responsibility in responding to an emergency or disaster, the private sector also has an enormous potential to support and complement government action at all levels – national, municipal and local levels, and even in favour of other countries in the region – for the benefit of the community in general, and particularly the most vulnerable social sectors. In this connection, they recognized the need to continue identifying, systematizing and analyzing the

various tools, mechanisms, instruments, resources and services that the private sector can offer to support and complement government action for disaster risk reduction.

- c. While cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean is not new and emerges spontaneously whenever a disaster occurs – as an expression of solidarity and corporate social responsibility – it is possible to improve and strengthen the cooperation mechanisms offered by the private sector to governments, so as to improve their efficiency in contributing to disaster risk reduction in all phases (prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery).
- d. It was also evident that an active participation of the private sector in the regional, national and territorial strategies for disaster risk reduction is of the utmost interest and importance not only for governments, but also for the business sector itself, and that partnerships between the public and private sectors in this area allow for protecting the productive sector vis-à-vis adverse events.
- e. The development and implementation of protocols in line with current legislation in each State, between the private sector and the national authorities in charge of disaster risk reduction in our countries, are of crucial importance to ensure the effectiveness of cooperation between the business sector and the governments in this area.
- f. They also acknowledged that it is necessary to reduce the trend to assume a biased reactive approach to respond to disasters that has prevailed in recent years. In this regard, they reiterated the importance of further promoting comprehensive actions to prevent and reduce risk conditions – such as shared responsibility and joint efforts of all sectors of society – thus moving from the typical reactive to a proactive anticipatory action. Based on these principles, public and private investment in risk prevention could turn into a highly beneficial action for the business sector.
- g. In this connection, it was clear that characterizing and assessing risk scenarios is a particularly important area in which the private sector can make significant contributions, not only to support government actions, but mainly to ensure their return on investment, protect their property, assets and personnel, promote continuity of operations, enhance their reputation and corporate image, and promote sustainable strategies for business growth.
- h. In this connection, participants welcomed the Statement of Commitment by the Private Sector for Disaster Prevention, Resilience and Risk Reduction, and took note of the establishment of the Private Sector Partnership for Disaster Risk Reduction by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), which was considered a valuable mechanism for greater private sector involvement in this area in Latin America and the Caribbean.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The national authorities of SELA Member States responsible for disaster risk reduction must recognize the importance and need to continue working in a coordinated way with regional and subregional institutions and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), within the framework of cooperation efforts between

governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction and creation of public-private partnerships.

2. The Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and the United Nations, through the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), besides ensuring inter-agency coordination and cooperation, enables both entities to make some headway in issues related to the private sector involvement in disaster risk reduction, defined as priority areas of the "Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015."

3. In the context of cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction, participants identified a range of priority areas of interest to be dealt with in future meetings and activities organized by SELA, the ISDR and USAID-OFDA-LAC, such as the following: the continuity of governance, basic services and businesses in post-disaster conditions (considered to be of emergency); rules and standards (which should be regionalized) for the action of companies in disaster preparedness; public and private investment; the characterization of risk scenarios based on past and future events (considering climate change); training of human resources and institutions specialized in risk management; dissemination and awareness raising among corporate actors about the nature, scope and importance of disaster risk reduction, among others. As a tool to make strides in this direction, participants welcomed the opportunity to establish, within the framework of the Private Sector Partnership for Disaster Risk Reduction being promoted by the UNISDR, a Private Sector Promoting Group for DRR in Latin America and the Caribbean.

4. Participants recommended to promote the creation and consolidation of a culture of prevention and risk management in the private sector in Latin America and the Caribbean, and continue to identify, systematize and analyze the various devices, mechanisms, tools, resources, services and forms of cooperation that could be offered by the private sector to support the government action in cases of disaster in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this connection, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, along with the ISDR, USAID-OFDA-LAC and other interested institutions, will make the appropriate arrangements to provide continuity and follow up on this proposal.

5. The Permanent Secretariat of SELA and the ISDR must seek the support and cooperation of regional and subregional business associations for the dissemination of useful information and documentation about strategies for disaster risk reduction already in force in our region, so that they are spread among their members. To that end, efforts will be made to seek the endorsement of the national chambers of commerce and industry and institutions for small and medium-sized enterprises. Regarding SMEs, the information platform of SELA programme for SMEs is available, as well as that offered by the Private Sector Partnership for Disaster Risk Reduction being promoted by the UNISDR. This effort is open to the participation of private actors involved in national and regional platforms for disaster risk reduction promoted by the ISDR and national authorities responsible for risk management, as well as actions being and to be developed by USAID-OFDA-LAC in the region. In this regard, participants recommended that SELA should work in a coordinated way with the Latin American Industries Association (AILA) with a view to organizing a joint meeting next year to discuss the possibilities and requirements of cooperation between the private sector and governments in our region in the area of disaster risk reduction.

6. Regional and subregional institutions specialized in disaster risk reduction must continue with their efforts to disseminate their cooperation activities, in order to maintain a constant flow of information on the activities that each organization carries out in this

area. In this regard, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, along with the ISDR and USAID-OFDA-LAC, expressed their willingness to support regional institutions in disseminating information, documents, experiences and best practices through its various information mechanisms.

7. The delegations thanked the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the City of Knowledge Foundation, for their organization and support in conducting this Regional Seminar.

After presenting the conclusions and recommendations of the seminar, the organizers proceeded with the closing ceremony.

C. CLOSING SESSION

The closing speeches were delivered by the authorities of the institutions that organized the Regional Seminar:

The first speech was delivered by Mr. Ricardo Mena, Head of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), who thanked SELA and USAID-OFDA-LAC for their support in promoting this initiative. He congratulated Antonio Romero, Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), who concluded his term at SELA with the conduction of this seminar, thanking him for his remarkable efforts and support during these years and wishing him the greatest success and a happy return to his country of origin. Similarly, Mena thanked all the participants who made some time in their tight agendas to attend this meeting, which proves their interest in this topic. Mena expressed his desire to continue joining efforts in this area of work in future meetings, as well as his gratitude to the private sector representatives who contributed with their refreshing views and remarks. As suggested in one of the recommendations, Mena expressed his interest in creating a collegiate group with members of the private sector to promote these issues in a more dynamic, efficient and effective way in order to build more resilient societies, thus reducing losses of human lives. Finally, as suggested in the base document, Mena recalled the need to make a change so as to focus not only on response to disasters but on prevention and mitigation, in order to minimize economic and social losses caused by disasters and to ensure that the staunch efforts of our countries lead to a truly sustainable development. Mena especially thanked Kiki Rebecca Lawal, Business Partnerships Programme Officer of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), who pledged to continue to support the region through the Private Sector Advisory Group, with a leading role as regards joint efforts with the private sector.

The second speech was delivered by Mr. Sidney Velado, Regional Advisor of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, (USAID/OFDA/LAC). He thanked SELA officials, particularly Javier Gordon, who could not attend the meeting for health reasons, but whose efforts were crucial to organizing it. He also thanked Antonio Romero and Herminia Fonseca, as well as Ricardo Mena and the ISDR, for their efforts in conducting the event. Velado recalled that disasters are larger than the sum of our efforts, stressing that including the private sector in this regional initiative evidences that it plays a very important role in DRR efforts and could undoubtedly make valuable contributions in this area. He praised the productive exchanges with the representatives of the private sector, who offered interesting visions

and experiences that could serve as examples at the regional level. Velado thanked the representatives of the Member States of SELA, the national civil defence systems, regional and international organizations and the private sector, who actively participated in the two-day seminar. He concluded by wishing participants a happy return to their countries.

Finally, Mr. Antonio Romero, Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) said that working directly with the ISDR and USAID-OFDA-LAC has been a real privilege for the Permanent Secretariat of SELA. He recalled that SELA is an inter-governmental organization aimed at promoting regional cooperation, consultation and coordination. In conducting such a great and specific effort, the Permanent Secretariat has sought alliances with experts in the subject at the regional level, such as the ISDR and USAID-OFDA-LAC. Romero recalled that, within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations, through the ISDR, and the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, to promote cooperation and coordination in the area of disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean (2011-2015), specifically in the area of "cooperation among governments and private sector for disaster risk reduction", the Permanent Secretariat of SELA will continue to undertake initiatives to promote partnerships between the public and private sectors to make strides as regards this issue at the regional and subregional levels. Finally, he thanked all the guests for their active participation during the two-day seminar.

A N N E X I

Agenda

COOPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: FOCUS, PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

17 and 18 November 2011. Panama City, Panama

Address: City of Knowledge. Convention Centre. Building # 184, Conference Rooms 108 and 109. Clayton, Ancón. PO Box 0843-03081, Panama City, Republic of Panama

Objectives: i) Analyze the approaches, progress and challenges of cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean; ii) Begin the process to identify, systematize and analyze the various mechanisms, tools, services and ways for cooperation which could be offered by the private sector to support governments in cases of disaster in Latin America and the Caribbean; iii) Relate experiences and best practices on the contribution and cooperation offered by the private sector in cases of disaster in the region, in support of the actions taken towards disaster risk reduction by governments; and iv) Recommend policy measures to improve cooperation and coordination between the private and public sectors for disaster risk reduction in the region.

Thursday 17 November 2011

Morning

8:30 – 9:00 **REGISTRATION**

9:00 **OPENING SESSION**

- Speech by the Head of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), Ricardo Mena
- Speech by the Regional Advisor of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (OFDA-LAC), Sidney Velado
- Speech by the Permanent Secretary of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System, Ambassador José Rivera Banuet

9:30 – 9:45 Coffee break

9:45 **INTRODUCTORY SESSION. PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY ON "GUIDELINES FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: APPROACHES, PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES"**

Alejandro Linayo, SELA Consultant

SESSION I: INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL INITIATIVES FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR, FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Moderator: Ricardo Mena, Head of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)

- United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), Kiki Rebecca Lawal, Programme Officer - Business Partnerships
- World Bank: Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR). Haris Sanahuja, Senior Disaster Risk Management Specialist, Urban Water and Sanitation, Risk Management Unit
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Gerard Gómez, Regional Adviser of the Programme
- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). Dana Van Alphen, Regional Adviser on Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief
- Pan American Development Foundation (FUPAD). Louis Alexander, Senior Programme Director

12:30 – 01:30 Debate

01:30 – 3:00 **Lunch offered by SELA**

<i>Afternoon</i>

3:00

SESSION II: SUBREGIONAL COOPERATION INITIATIVES BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Moderator: Antonio Romero, Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA)

CARIBBEAN REGION

- Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA). Ronald Jackson, Director General, Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) of Jamaica

SOUTH AMERICAN REGION

- Productive Integration Group of MERCOSUR. Raquel Piaggio, Director of the Environmental Unit, Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining
- Specialized Meeting on Socio-Natural Disaster Risk Reduction, Civil Defence, Civil Protection, and Humanitarian Assistance (MERCOSUR). Rodolfo Costas, Director a.i. of the National Emergencies System of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay

4:45 - 5:00 Coffee break

5:00

ANDEAN REGION

- Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Relief (CAPRADE). Diana Catalina Torres, International Cooperation Adviser of the Direction of Risk Management of Colombia

- Andean Business Advisory Council (CCEA) of the Andean Community (CAN). Juan Camilo Nariño, Vice-Chairman of Foreign Trade of the National Association of Industrialists of Colombia

CENTRAL AMERICAN REGION

- Coordination Centre for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC). René Iván Morales, Executive Secretary
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6:00 – 6:30 Debate

Friday, 18 November 2011

Morning

09:00 **SESSION III: THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: COOPERATION INITIATIVES WITH THE PUBLIC SECTOR - PANEL WITH PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES**

Moderator: Fabián Arellano, Technical Manager of the Regional Disaster Assistance Programme (RDAP) of the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (OFDA-LAC)

- Total Oil and Gas Venezuela. Diana Vilera Sustainable Development Manager
- DHL Disaster Response Team. Jorge Augusto Rodríguez
- Grupo Éxito. Diego Moreno, Risk Management National Chief
- UNISDR Private Sector Advisory Group. Philip Verges, Founder of the Small Equity Initiative
- Chamber of Trade, Industry and Services of Caracas. Víctor Maldonado, Executive Director

12:30 – 01:30 Debate

01:30 – 3:00 **Lunch offered by SELA**

Afternoon

3:00 **SESSION IV: THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: COOPERATION INITIATIVES WITH THE PUBLIC SECTOR. PANEL WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AUTHORITIES OF THE NATIONAL SYSTEMS FOR DRR IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Moderator: Ricardo Mena, Head of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)

- Discussion panel among the representatives of the national systems for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean

4:30

SESSION V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Moderator: Antonio Romero, Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA)

Remarks by participants

5:30

CLOSING SESSION

- Speech by the Head of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), Ricardo Mena
- Speech by the Regional Advisor of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (OFDA-LAC), Sidney Velado
- Speech by Antonio Romero, Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA)

A N N E X I I

Speech by Mr. Ricardo Mena, Head of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a pleasure for me to be here, sitting at the board table with Ambassador Jose Rivera Banuet, Permanent Secretary of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA); and my dear friend Sidney Velado, of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID/OFDA/LAC).

This event is of the utmost significance for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and I am very happy that we have brought together such a selected group of representatives of governmental and intergovernmental organizations, international institutions and obviously a relevant group of private sector representatives in Latin America and the Caribbean, whose presence we warmly welcome here.

The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction is a secretariat within the General Secretariat of the United Nations which aims to promote disaster reduction through the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. I do not know how many of you are informed about the Hyogo Framework for Action. In short, it is an international document that provides communities, governments and obviously the private sector a guideline to minimize loss of lives as a result of disasters caused by natural hazards and strengthen the resilience of countries, nations and communities.

Disasters caused by natural hazards, as you know, impact the lives and livelihoods of millions of people around the world in both developed and developing countries. Here in the region we have several examples that show the huge impact of these phenomena. Such was the case last year of the hugely destructive earthquake in Haiti and the other major one that hit Chile, but countries like Japan, New Zealand and Australia have also been affected by disasters caused by natural hazards in recent years. We have seen how Central America has been subject to very adverse weather conditions that have produced big losses, as well as in Colombia. So we start from the fact that any nation in the world is subject to the impact of disasters, and developed nations are not even immune to such disasters.

Economic losses and insured property, as well as frequency and severity of catastrophes, are growing due to rapid population and economic growth, thus leading to concentration of assets and investment in urban areas, where also most of the world population is concentrated. You already know that more than 50% of the world population lives in urban areas, and in some countries of Latin America and the Caribbean this figure rises to 70%. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), a more rapid growth is expected by the middle of this century, in 2050, when 89% of the population is expected to live in cities; this will result in a concentration of more assets and investments, businesses, shopping and activities in urban areas, increasing their vulnerability.

Disasters affect both directly and indirectly all business sectors, causing problems and being an obstacle for all operational and logistic activities of companies and governments because of the damage and impact on properties or loss of critical infrastructure resources, such as energy supply, communication lines, public infrastructure, distribution networks, etc.

Disasters also affect the company staff and customers. This is also the case of governments, since disasters also affect both economically and physically public employees and those they serve, particularly those living in affected areas. This is of vital

importance not only for governments, which are responsible for ensuring the safety of the population, but also for companies, which aim to make a profit at the end of its financial year. And if the year-end balance is affected by a disaster, preventing the company from continuing operations, benefits may obviously decrease significantly or lead to the bankruptcy of the company.

While the primary responsibility to protect communities falls on both national and local governments, the private sector plays undoubtedly a crucial role in disaster management and resilience development. When we talk about resilience, whose definition is not shared by all, we mean the ability of a system, organization, company or group of people to recover effectively, efficiently and quickly from an adverse situation.

Thus, the private sector shares both the consequences of these risks and the responsibility to reduce them. We must be aware that in most countries the private sector is perhaps the main generator of GDP, employs most of the population and is the main vehicle for innovation and investment. This obviously varies from country to country. For example, Chile is a neoliberal open economy where the private sector plays an extremely important role, while other countries report most investments made by their governments. This obviously depends on the level of development and the economic development model of each country. As regards the economic case for risk reduction ex-ante, i.e. before the event, I would like to share with you some data: i) for every dollar spent on prevention four to seven dollars can be saved in disaster response, which is why we attach great importance to the incorporation of the risk variable into the analysis of public investment projects. We have seen that some governments of our region, often with external funding, are building roads, ports, airports, schools and hospitals that do not meet the minimum standards to ensure quality and subsistence over time. The same happens with the private sector, which often builds industrial, commercial and service facilities that do not meet standards or codes to ensure their durability, putting at serious risk the economic potential of a company; ii) it has been proven that companies that follow best practices to protect their assets from risks produce 40% less volatile revenues than those without such programmes, and the average property loss is 20 times higher for companies that have weak risk management practices than for those who already have DRR or business risk management programmes as part of the daily work of the organization; iii) most companies that do not have a business continuity programme or the Business Continuity Planning are more likely to file for bankruptcy as a result of a disaster situation than those who do have a business continuity programme. This obviously should call us to reflection on the need to take action.

The International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction has worked very actively with the private sector at the global level, and organized a Private Sector Advisory Council to guide us on how we should handle this issue with the sector. This body is also taking a series of actions and undertaking commitments to ensure that this issue is largely dealt with by the private sector, and more synergies are established between the private and public sectors to ensure that steps are followed to reduce loss of life and increase resilience of communities and towns.

This call to action by the private sector is based on five points: First, it is absolutely essential to develop public-private partnerships, and this forum is the appropriate space to develop them. Second, we have to take the most of the expertise and strengths of the private sector to support these risk management processes. Third, it is important to promote collaboration for the exchange and dissemination of information. Fourth, collaboration is also relevant to support risk assessment at both national and local levels.

And fifth, it is necessary to support national laws, regulations, policies and programmes that strengthen risk reduction and increase levels of resilience.

Based on this background, Ladies and Gentlemen, Ambassador Rivera, my dear friend Sydney, I think this event provides an excellent opportunity for this issue to be dealt with in our region, where there is a vibrant private sector and a relationship between the public and private sectors that has been very positive and can offer a lot of areas for collaboration.

We hope you take advantage of this space.

We hope to know each other better, learn from your experiences and encourage this dialogue, collaboration and exchanges in the most positive way.

I appreciate the presence of you all.

A N N E X I I I

**Speech by Mr. Sidney Velado, Regional Advisor
of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
(USAID-OFDA-LAC)**

Permanent Secretary of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System, Ambassador José Rivera Banuet;

Head of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), Mr. Ricardo Mena;

Representatives of regional organizations;

Distinguished delegates of Member States;

Private sector representatives;

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of USAID and the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, we welcome the initiative of SELA and the ISDR to join efforts with a view to making a stop in our activities and taking time to share experiences, reflect and learn more about the cooperation between governments and private sector for disaster risk reduction. One of the strategic activities of our regional office is to build public-private partnerships as part of its regional plan for RRD, and we are pleased to be part of this important regional event.

There is no doubt that the region has made significant strides in building public-private partnerships, especially in the area of natural disaster response. USAID/OFDA in the past funded the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) and formed the so-called Disaster Management Alliance (DMA). An important work was carried out in different countries: Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua and Trinidad and Tobago. The results of this project will be reported by Mr. Louis Alexander of the PADF. In short, we can say that the private enterprise has become aware of the need for companies to be resilient and the fact that the less they are closed, the lower the financial losses will be. In addition, Corporate Social Responsibility can be a win-win business, as stated by Mr. Linayo in the document prepared for SELA "Guidelines for cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction: Approaches, achievements and challenges." The theme Business Continuity is fully well-known. Mr. Linayo will present statistics that show a correlation between length of time for post-disaster recovery and business continuity. In short, companies struggling to recover tend to fail. There is evidence that when the company opens, its employees and the community benefit from the goods and services the company offers to its customers.

Allow me to share with you my recent experience as a member of a damage assessment team sent by the U.S. government in response to a call by the Government of El Salvador (GOES). On a visit to the relief collection centre called CIFCO, I had the opportunity to see how the company DHL was helping the Logistics Commission of the GOES to organize humanitarian supplies received from the international community, private businesses, civic organizations and Salvadoran citizens. It is an excellent example of a win-win alliance.

In the same mission, we visited several affected communities in different regions of the country after 10 days of rain without ceasing. According to a preliminary assessment report of damage and loss in El Salvador caused by the tropical depression 12-E, no phenomena like this have been reported in the country in the last 40 years, since a reliable measurement system was available. Nor had the average water storage reached 747 mm. With Hurricane Mitch, the most devastating phenomenon to date, 472 mm of water fell.

I was greatly impressed by Mr. Joaquin Raymundo Centeno, a resident of Barra Ciega, a rural coastal area of the Department of Sonsonate. He is married and has 4 daughters. Don Raymundo lost his home as a result of an overflow of Banderas River, which I think grew ten times its normal course. When meeting with the sea and this being at high tide, the river overflowed, destroying 4 houses and affecting others in Barra Ciega. The family of Don Raymundo sought refuge in a safe place with members of their church. When asked "What would you like to recover?" – considering that he had not only lost his home but also his assets and pets – he answered that he would like his neighbour who lives opposite him and had been affected by the flood, having lost much of the inventory of her retail shop, to recover her products. This struck me, as Don Raymundo had not only suffered great material loss. He said that he had not worked in the cooperative during the 10 days it rained and therefore had not received payment. As if that were not enough, he and his family were still living at home with friends and he was asking us to help his neighbour! When I asked him why he was not asking for help for his family, but for his neighbour, he answered that whenever they needed it, the neighbour gave them credit until payday came in the cooperative. For him this was very important to support his family. I told him his attitude was very commendable and admired him for his generosity and humility.

On a visit to the Department of Ahuachapán, I met five women who brought their children in arms and asked for humanitarian aid to the Mayor of Cara Sucia but received nothing. When asked for more information, they explained that the border bridge "Hacha Dura," which separates El Salvador from Guatemala in the coastal area, had been felled by an overflow of Paz River. In the absence of trade and economic movement in the border, they lost their livelihood, which consisted of selling food and refreshments to people passing through the border. After several days of no income, they asked desperately for help, but as their homes were not flooded, they were not considered victims of the tropical depression 12-E.

Both examples, that of Don Raymundo and his neighbour who owns a little shop and that of the five ladies seeking relief, illustrate the fact that when we speak about the private sector, we refer not only to legitimate companies, but also to the men and women who make up the informal sector of the countries in the region. This is still a pending issue that has not been considered.

The publication "PERSPECTIVES ON THE INFORMAL ECONOMY AND ITS ORGANIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA", by Lucía Rosales of the Global Labour Institute, includes the following information:

- According to the ILO, in 1990, 51.6% of total employees in Latin America were part of the informal economy.
- In 1997, this percentage rose to 57.4%, an increase of 11.2% between the two dates. Employment in the informal economy grew in all countries under review, but the increase rate was higher in Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela.
- The document says that in 1998, according to ECLAC, the highest percentages of urban population employed in the informal economy were reported in Bolivia (59.5%), Nicaragua (57.9%) and Paraguay (52.2 %).
- The contribution of the informal economy in GDP (Gross Domestic Product) was approximately 29% for Latin America.

According to the publication "Latin American Economic Outlook 2011. HOW MIDDLE-CLASS IS LATIN AMERICA?," the Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development was established by decision of the OECD Council on 23 October 1962 and comprises 25 member countries. The document includes the following information:

- Countries in Latin America have managed to resist the global economic and financial crisis more successfully than in many other regions of the world. Similarly, they are showing relatively faster signs of recovery. Economic growth in the region is expected to be stronger than in most OECD countries... (page 4)
- The report says that middle-income groups are economically vulnerable: few have university degrees, for example, and many of them work in the informal sector. This is a "middle class" that is not quite similar to that which became the engine of development in many OECD countries.
- To decrease this vulnerability and ensure that middle-income groups play a larger role in economic development, policies to promote upward social mobility are needed. This includes pensions to protect today's middle-income workers from falling into poverty later in life. Better education policies, too, can contribute critically to ensuring that the children in these income groups achieve more secure livelihoods than their parents, while improving productivity and competitiveness of the economy as a whole. (page 4)
- The informal sector is not composed only of disadvantaged workers, but it is also a middle-sector issue. Indeed, the number of middle-sector informal workers in Latin America is high. Focusing on four countries alone – Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and Mexico – 44 million people are informal middle-sector workers, a large share of the total population of 72 million middle-sector workers in those countries. There are more informal than formal workers among the middle sectors in all countries except Chile.
- In summary, the income category to which most informal workers belong in absolute terms (with the exception of Bolivia) is the middle sector – and there are more informal than formal workers among the middle sectors and the disadvantaged in all cases except Chile. (page 66)

What do you consider to be some of the important implications related to the informal sector that should be dealt with in the Regional Seminar?

Are we addressing DRR in the private sector when we have not yet included the largest employer in Latin America?

What would be the Business Continuity Plan for members of the informal sector in the region?

A N N E X I V

Speech by Ambassador José Rivera Banuet, Permanent Secretary of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA)

Mr. Ricardo Mena Speck, representative of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR);

Mr. Sidney Velado, Regional Advisor Of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (USAID/OFDA/LAC);

Representatives of National Systems for Disaster Risk Reduction of Member States of SELA;

Representatives of regional and international organizations;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) to welcome you to this Regional Seminar on "Cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: Focus, progress and challenges," organized jointly with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the City of Knowledge Foundation (FCS).

During these two days of work and discussions, we will have the opportunity to analyze this issue, trying to focus on four key objectives we have identified as priorities in this regional meeting, namely:

- i) Analyze the approaches, progress and challenges of cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- ii) Initiate the process of identification, systematization and analysis of the various devices, mechanisms, tools, services and forms of cooperation that the private sector is able to offer to support government action during disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- iii) Present experiences and best practices on the contribution and cooperation by the private sector for risk reduction and disaster response in the region, in support of actions taken by governments; and
- iv) Recommend policy measures to improve cooperation and coordination between the public and the private sectors for disaster risk reduction in the region.

As a contribution to the exchange of ideas, information and experiences to take place in this regional seminar, the Permanent Secretariat prepared a study entitled "Guidelines for cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction: Approaches, achievements and challenges," which stresses that although the private sector cooperation in disaster scenarios is not new and the support by these actors has been present to a greater or lesser extent in every case of disaster occurred in our region in recent years, several elements seem to suggest that it is possible to improve the mechanisms and principles by which national and regional private actors may interact with state and social actors in the tasks related to natural disaster risk reduction.

One of the most promising aspects of this effort being promoted by the Permanent Secretariat, together with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance of the U.S. Agency for International Development (OFDA-USAID), is the possibility for it to become a window of opportunity so as to avoid the regional public-private cooperation for disaster risk reduction as has

happened in recent years being focused on assistance once contingencies appear. Instead of that, a much more forward-looking and sustainable approach should be promoted and encouraged.

In this connection, it is necessary to identify, systematize and analyze devices, mechanisms, tools and services that may be offered by the private sector to complement and support the government action in cases of disasters, but also – and above all – to sensitize the public and private sectors on the need to support sustainable practices for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Besides being an opportunity for cooperation available to governments in the region, this approach is a wise and highly profitable investment for the private sector in terms of security of its property and facilities, business continuity and continuity of operations, consolidation of its corporate image and corporate social responsibility. In addition, it allows us to deal with a priority issue for disaster risk reduction from the perspective of both the public and private sectors, which is the continuity of government and the production and trade in cases of disasters.

As many of you probably know, the themes of natural disasters and emergency care devices have been analyzed by the Permanent Secretariat since 2007, in compliance with mandates arising from the Ibero-American Summit and the Rio Group summit, on the initiative of the President of Mexico. It was precisely in 2007 when we organized the “XVIII Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean” on “Cooperation for countries with a high degree of vulnerability to natural disasters,” held in Caracas on 17 and 18 September.

In 2009, the Permanent Secretariat held two seminars on response mechanisms to natural disasters: the first one dealt with the experiences in the Andean Region and the Southern Cone and was held in Caracas in September; and the second one analyzed the experiences in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean and was held in Panama City in October. Both initiatives were conducted with the sponsorship of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and the Government of Mexico through the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs and the Secretariat of Governance.

Then, in 2010, the Permanent Secretariat organized several events, among which are:

a) The “Meeting of the Working Group for improving a proposal to develop a simplified mechanism for disaster risk reduction and management in Latin American and Caribbean countries,” which took place in Mexico City on 7 June. At this meeting, the Advisory Technical Committee to establish a simplified regional mechanism for response to emergencies arising from disasters was created to operate under the coordination of the Government of Mexico.

b) The “Regional Seminar on Public Investment and Financial Mechanisms, Insurance and Reinsurance against Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean: Recent Experiences,” held in Mexico City on 22 and 23 November with the support of the Government of Mexico and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction; and

c) The “Meeting on the Institutional Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Africa,” held in Panama City on 13 and 14 December 2010. The “Meeting of the institutions of Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Africa for Disaster Risk Reduction” held in Panama City on 13 and 14 December with the support of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the Ibero-American General Secretariat and the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund of the Group of 77.

Gradually, and with the support of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA continued to focus its work on the private sector contribution and public-private partnerships for disaster risk reduction, since the subject was already being dealt with by governments and existing regional institutions.

This is precisely the contribution that the Permanent Secretariat, jointly with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, has sought to provide in this initiative, and the line of work that could be developed in the future so as not to duplicate efforts or waste time and resources.

This coincidence of ideas and approaches between the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction has led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly address this issue by joining forces and cooperating with each other.

We must remember that the Latin American and Caribbean region covers four active tectonic plates, hence the seismic recurrence and volcanic activity. It is an area prone to tropical storms, and the Caribbean coast is part of the continent hurricane corridor. In addition, it includes a system of mountains and watersheds that make it vulnerable to landslides and floods. Environmental degradation, climate change, human settlements in vulnerable areas and deepening poverty, among others, have caused these natural events to become disasters, which with greater frequency and intensity result in incalculable human, social and economic losses.

Natural disasters that have affected our region in recent months are a stark reminder of the urgency and priority that all regional and international organizations should give to disaster risk reduction and the need to work in a coordinated and cooperative manner.

The torrential rains that hit Central America caused heavy loss of life, victims and economic and material damages that led to calls for international solidarity.

According to the latest statistics released by the "Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters" (CRED), during the first half of 2011, 108 natural disasters took place in the world, leaving at least 23,638 people killed, 43.7 million people affected and economic losses in excess of 253.230 billion dollars.

Geographically, the Americas reported 21 natural disasters, which killed about 1,535 people, affected 648,503 people and caused economic damages in the amount of 14,000 million, a figure significantly higher than that received by our country as official development assistance.

These figures speak for themselves and are a painful reminder of the need to continue strengthening the culture of prevention and disaster risk reduction.

I hope these two days of discussions are very productive and result in specific recommendations to continue working on this important issue next year with a view to supporting and complementing the actions of our governments in disaster management and prevention, from a comprehensive and sustainable perspective and with the increasing involvement of Latin American and Caribbean private and business sectors.

I wish you every success in this work.

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