



Final Report

Economic and Technical Cooperation

*VI Meeting on Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: Business continuity and prevention plans for the tourism sector
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
7 and 8 December 2017
SP/VIRAPPRRDALC-IF-17*

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I. RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

1. [The VI Meeting on Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: Business continuity and prevention plans for the tourism sector](#), organized by the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), the Ministry of the Presidency and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of the Dominican Republic, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID/OFDA), was held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on 7 and 8 December 2017.
2. This regional event aimed to: i) analyze the main variables that contingency, prevention, business continuity and continuity of operations plans should contain to deal with the priorities and the essential and strategic issues of the tourism sector in the Member States of SELA, and ii) exchange experiences and best practices on the development of contingency, business continuity and continuity of operations plans within institutions and companies in the tourism sector.
3. In accordance with the approved agenda, four working sessions were carried out to deal with the following topics: i) Impact of disasters on the tourism sector in Latin America and the Caribbean; ii) National experiences in disaster risk management: Impact of disasters on the tourism sector and creation of contingency and business continuity plans; iii) National and international experiences of the private sector: Impact of disasters on the tourism sector. Contingency and business continuity plans; and iv) Main elements to be considered in public-private partnerships for disaster risk reduction in the tourism sector.
4. Representatives of the Member States, regional and international organizations and the private sector made their respective presentations, in accordance with the approved agenda.
5. Participants included representatives of the following Member States of SELA: Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay; and of the following institutions of the private sector: Caribbean Association for Industry and Commerce (CAIC); the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry; the Guatemala Chamber of Industry; the Chamber of Insurers and Reinsurers of the Dominican Republic; the Dominican Electricity Industry Association; the National Business Support Network for Environmental Protection of the Dominican Republic (ECORED); the Dominica Association of Industry and Commerce; the Union of Nicaragua for Corporate Social Responsibility (UniRSE); CentraRSE; the Business Foundation for Social Action (FUNDEMAS); the National Chamber of Tourism of Peru (CANATUR Peru); the National Association of Hotels and Restaurants (ASONAHORES), among others.
6. In addition, representatives of the following organizations attended the regional meeting: the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); the United Nations (UN); the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ); the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); as well as members of the academy, such as the University of the West Indies. The [list of participants](#) is available at:

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<http://www.sela.org/bd-documental/documentos/reduccion-riesgo-desastres-participantes/>

7. At the opening session, the following participants took the floor: [Ambassador Javier Paulinich](#), Permanent Secretary of SELA; His Excellency [Francisco Javier Domínguez Brito](#), Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of the Dominican Republic; and [Nahuel Arenas](#), Deputy Chief for the Americas of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).
8. The Presiding Board at the Opening Session included Mrs Patricia Abreu Fernández, Vice-Minister for Cooperation and International Affairs of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of the Dominican Republic, and Brigadier General Leonardo Sabater Núñez, Technical Director of the Commission for Disaster Risk Management of the Ministry of the Presidency of the Dominican Republic.
9. The Permanent Secretariat of SELA provided the participants with [documents and support material](#).
10. Photographs taken during the event can be seen in the [photo gallery](#).
11. Videos recorded during the meeting are available at: <http://www.sela.org/es/eventos/2017/12/continuidad-de-negocio/videos/>
12. Within the framework of the meeting, the [Agreement-Declaration for the establishment of the Dominican Republic's National Chapter of the Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies \(ARISE\)](#) was signed.
13. At the closing session, the floor was taken by Ambassador Javier Paulinich, Permanent Secretary of SELA; Nahuel Arenas, Deputy Chief for the Americas of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR); José Alcántara, Deputy Director of Civil Defence and the National Emergency Commission of the Dominican Republic; and Patricia Abreu Fernández, Vice-Minister for Cooperation and International Affairs of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of the Dominican Republic.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Following are some general conclusions that emerged from the discussions and the exchange of ideas and experiences during the *VI Meeting on Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean*, held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on 7 and 8 December 2017.

1. The various presentations made by the public and private representatives highlighted the significant impact of natural disasters on our economies, companies, and policies for economic and social development.
2. The experiences presented during the event reiterate the validity and relevance of agreements reached within the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, in particular its seven targets (reduce global disaster mortality; reduce the number of affected people; reduce economic losses; reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services; increase the number of countries with disaster risk reduction strategies; enhance international cooperation, and increase the availability of multi-hazard early warning systems) and priorities for action.
3. The goals of the Sendai Framework are focused on prevention of new disaster risks, reducing existing ones and strengthening resilience, implementing measures to avoid and reduce exposure and vulnerability to hazards, and enhancing preparedness and recovery.
4. It is necessary to work on a regional agenda that incorporates the goals and complementary objectives contained in the agreements reached at Summits on Climate Change, in the 2020-2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in other related regional and international agreements. We are living in a particularly crucial, historical moment, as many of the reached multilateral agreements are fostering commitments to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and the environment, which has resulted in better public policies, regulatory frameworks and institutional structures.
5. The challenge for Latin America and the Caribbean is that the environmental and risk management variables are considered and incorporated into development plans and programmes and into public-private projects.
6. Disasters are caused not only by natural phenomena, but also by development models that are not sustainable.
7. DRR is the responsibility of all social stakeholders, but it may vary from one stakeholder to another. All of them are able to contribute. Joint work and coordinated response are factors that will make the difference when an adverse event occurs. Multi-hazard scenarios should also be addressed from a multi-stakeholder perspective.
8. Since DRR has a cross-cutting impact on various sectoral areas, it must be evaluated by all the sectoral ministries and other authorities of the centralised and decentralised public administration to local governments (governor's offices, mayor's offices and municipalities). A similar scheme should be developed within the private sector, where the information on DRR should be disseminated and promoted by business associations, chambers, business federations and confederations, and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

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9. International and regional cooperation is an effective resource to compensate for the differences in knowledge and experiences about DRR among the various governmental and private risk management focal points.
10. Focal points in charge of DRR shared their experiences regarding their plans for continuity of business and operations, as well as their objectives, critical aspects, coverage, responsibilities, activation and implementation, with the aim of highlighting the benefits that said plans can bring about in terms of the identification of events that could impact the enterprises and affect their operations, investments and human resources, minimize the loss of information and critical and essential operations in the event of an adverse event.
11. Even though there are successful experiences and best practices as regards partnerships between the public and private sectors for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean, all stakeholders involved in DRR must encourage and promote meeting spaces and joint work. It would be useful to have a directory of best practices, documents and specific resources about public-private approaches for DRR, which may serve as informative basis, and to establish a source of incentives and information for interested companies involved in this subject.
12. Special mention deserves the Agreement-Declaration for the establishment of the *National Chapter of the Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies (ARISE)* in Dominican Republic, signed with the *National Network of Business Support to Environmental Protection (ECORED)* of Dominican Republic. This initiative is expected to be replicated by other national private institutions that are aware of the need to build resilient enterprises, communities and societies.
13. Confidence is a fundamental factor for the construction of public-private partnerships. It is not a rhetorical element but a fundamental factor that determines the relationship between these two sectors. It is the basis for clear and transparent rules.
14. Business associations, chambers of commerce and sectoral and binational chambers are natural stakeholders for capturing and spreading the message of continuity of business and operations and thereby better positioning knowledge and tools offered by DRR to protect enterprises and their operations.
15. Emphasis was made on the work carried out by the UNISDR through ARISE (Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies), whereby the private sector joins the DRR to support and build resilient communities.
16. The tourism sector has an economic and strategic importance for the region, in view of its capacity to generate income and jobs for the economy. Thus, the creation of plans for continuity of business and operations, contingency and prevention should be considered a priority by government authorities responsible for DRR, business associations, enterprises and tourism-related service providers.
17. Participants identified a series of variables that should be incorporated to strengthen contingency, prevention and continuity of business and operations plans in order to meet the priorities and the essential and strategic issues of the tourism sector.

18. The usefulness of plans for continuity of business and operations depends on the authorities' capacity to keep them updated and on their knowledge by the parties involved, but above all they should be practiced periodically through drills in order to gradually incorporate the necessary corrections and adjustments.
19. Emphasis was made on the importance of coastal biodiversity in tourist areas and on the need to build resilience in view of the resulting benefits for coastal populations: wave attenuation, attenuation of storm surges and maintenance of coastal lines, among others. The protection offered by sand beds, seagrass, mangroves and reefs strengthens the resilience of our coasts to adverse events. Coastal biodiversity is a changing and dynamic system, which is extremely sensitive to changes in the environment (temperature, salinity, acidification, etc.), so that their protection reduces our own vulnerability in coastal areas. The protection of biodiversity is a topic of huge relevance given the threats emerged from climate change.
20. Tourism is a very sensitive sector that does not escape from multiple threat scenarios. Earthquakes, hurricanes and torrential rains are clear threats, but epidemics can also generate substantial losses in the tourist activity.
21. For tourist areas, it is essential for national institutions specialized in meteorology to provide reliable and timely early warnings, so that tourist operators and services can take the necessary actions.
22. The presentations highlighted the Caribbean experience in the institutional development of specialized emergency management agencies for the tourism sector, established by law and involving national institutions responsible for both tourism and prevention and initial response.
23. Some issues of interest for public-private partnerships focus on: the need to strengthen links of the tourism sector with risk management structures; to support the identification of probable risk scenarios to propose joint mitigation actions; to strengthen contingency plans and capacity of the tourism sector to minimize human losses and property damage; to contribute to the tourism sector as regards staff training; to incorporate tourist clusters into countries' emergency and contingency plans; and to promote the integration of tourism enterprises in the response of their respective communities.
24. It is important to continue making progress in efforts to include DRR in educational programmes at the primary, secondary and university levels. The incorporation of the risk variable into the academia would enable professionals to consider DRR in the development of their own professional projects. In addition, training for the design of continuity of business and operations plans should be considered and deepened in business schools.
25. It is necessary to promote the work being done by the *Latin American and Caribbean University Network for Disaster Risk Reduction (REDULAC)*, so that this initiative is nourished and strengthened by other educational efforts being developed in the region.
26. The academia could have a huge potential for dialogue and mediation between the public and private sectors, in parallel with its contribution to specialized technical knowledge.
27. Participants took note of the date for the "VI Meeting of the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction", which will take place in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, from 20 to 22 June

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2018. The meeting will be organized by the UNISDR and the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management of Colombia (NGRD). A recommendation was made to include it in the agendas of government authorities in charge of disaster risk reduction in the Member States and the public and private institutions responsible for this issue.