

## **REGIONAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 2018**

### **DECLARATION OF THE PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to address the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2018, in the name of the Pan American Health Organization.

For 40 years, the “Declaration of Alma Ata” has been a reference for policies that seek to promote “health for all”. The health situation in the region of the Americas has improved considerably in recent decades, reflected in the greater life expectancy, and important achievements such as the reduction of mortality in children under 5 years, the reduction of mortality due to noncommunicable diseases, and the decrease in incidence of some communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. Additionally, there has been increased spending on public health as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP).

The application of health disaster risk management policies and the International Health Regulations (IHR) have been improving performance of health systems in emergencies and disasters risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery .

The health and well-being of people is a key element of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, as it highlights the need to guarantee access to quality health services after disasters, and also because it reinforces an all hazards approach to disaster risk management, including both natural and human-generated threats. Additionally, four of the seven global goals are related to health.

For this reason, the health ministers of the Americas have been implementing the Plan of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction 2016-2021 since September 2016, harmonizing its four strategic lines with the Sendai Framework.

Countries are steadily advancing with concrete actions, such as the seven Caribbean countries presently implementing the innovative “Smart Hospitals” initiative – with support of the Department of International Development of the

United Kingdom –to make health facilities safe and “green”, addressing disaster risk reduction and climate change, both in adaptation and mitigation, and incorporating these criteria in planning, design, and construction of health facilities to guarantee the uninterrupted operation of health services during and after a disaster.

The Safe Hospitals initiative continues to expand, 32 countries in the Americas and 84 countries in the world apply the Hospital Safety Index and implement measures to improve the structural and non-structural security and functional safety of Hospitals.

PAHO supports countries to coordinate actions to prevent, prepare, detect, respond, and recover from emergencies and disasters, caused by all hazards, with the premise of guaranteeing the right to health, thus contributing to preservation of global health security.

PAHO recognizes Colombia’s progress in disaster risk management in health. The health authorities of Colombia, in close collaboration with the National Disaster Risk Management Unit, are leaders in disaster risk reduction.

The Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction is an opportunity to critically review the progress and challenges for the implementation of the Sendai Framework and make concrete decisions to protect the health of our populations; only by working together can we achieve it.

Ladies and Gentlemen