

Fifth Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas

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Towards Risk Informed Sustainable Development

Presentation of the "Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Management in the Agriculture and Food Security and Nutrition Sectors in Latin America and the Caribbean" and Related Events

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

Background

The Pro-Tempore Presidency of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (PPT-CELAC), with the cooperation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Americas' Regional Office of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), sponsored during the Fifth Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas (RP17) the Side Event on the **Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in the Agriculture¹ Sector and Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)**.

A series of activities were also organized around this event in order to achieve the following results:

1. Increase the degree of participation and commitment of countries, intergovernmental bodies, international cooperation agencies and other development actors for the implementation of the *Regional Strategy for DRM in the Agriculture Sector and FSN in Latin America and the Caribbean (hereinafter referred to as RS)*.
2. Share with the stakeholders in the agriculture sector the opportunity that the Sendai Framework and their participation in the Regional and Global Disaster Risk Reduction Platforms represents for the sustainable development of the sector.
3. Obtain inputs for the Regional Strategy from a sectoral approach, as well as generate support and coordination of traditional DRM actors from a cross-cutting approach.

Main results, points addressed and conclusions of the different activities related to the RS

Results:

- The Side Event generated interest and a broad participation, thus fulfilling its purpose of raising awareness among the various actors involved in DRM for the RS development process started in 2016. Interventions by high-level panel members underscored concerns about the growing significant impact of disasters in the agriculture sector and the central importance of DRM in

¹ The agriculture sector will be considered throughout this document in its broadest sense, including the sub-sectors of crops, livestock, forests, fisheries and aquaculture.





ministerial actions. They also reconfirmed the support of their countries for the RS development process, as well as the relevance of having this type of instrument in the region.

- The side event and activities related to the sector were attended by a large delegation of 13 senior agricultural authorities, representing countries from all the subregions of the continent, who were also able to participate in the different sessions that took place during the three days of the Fifth Regional Platform of Montreal and interact with the diverse participants.
- PR17 served in turn to bring to light the importance that the agriculture sector attaches to address disaster risk and to present sound DRM experiences implemented by the ministries of agriculture. The space also managed to forge important alliances with key players for the RS, such as the Andean Community of Nations and the International Center for Research on the El Niño Phenomenon.

Main points addressed and recommendations for the RS

Through the different sessions and activities carried out during the three days of the RP17, a series of relevant points and recommendations for the development of the RS were addressed. The following section summarizes these elements:

- The impact of climate change today determines that hydro-meteorological phenomena are the highest priority, even in countries affected by geological hazards, because of the intensity and frequency of disasters. The agriculture sector, due to its exposure to this type of phenomena, is undoubtedly the productive sector most affected by related disasters in the region.
- Collaborative and coordinated action between countries is of central importance as the magnitude and frequency of disasters generally exceeds countries' current management capacities.
- Faced with this situation, prospective action is key since basic historical knowledge is no longer sufficient. Regional action should play a central role in promoting frameworks that will allow countries to prepare and work to manage this new risk scenario.
- A high level of interest was shown in promoting exchange among countries in terms of instruments, mechanisms, protocols, information systems, good practices, among others, in order to generate more collaboration between the most advanced countries and the least developed countries in the field.

The following points were identified as particularly relevant to the regional approach:

- **To generate greater political support for DRM in agriculture sectors:**
 - There is an increasing awareness in agriculture ministries of the importance of developing sectoral DRM actions. However, it is necessary to further the definitions of political priorities, allocation of resources and the institutionalization of mechanisms.
 - There are sound experiences in the advocacy and promotion of standards from the global and regional levels that have proven to have very positive impacts at the national level. For example, the Global Campaign "Making Cities Resilient" led by UNISDR or "Safe Hospitals from Disasters", led by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in the region, have generated political will and promoted the risk management agenda in the respective sectors or government entities. It was proposed to evaluate whether a similar initiative could be generated for the agriculture sector.
 - Also mentioned was the importance of generating a political mandate for disaster risk management in the summits of agriculture ministers, such as the Inter-American Board of Ministers of Agriculture of the Organization of American States (OAS) or the Regional Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the FAO.





- Another element noted in this area was the need to generate solid data on losses and damages in the sector as a central element of advocacy for government allocation of resources towards prevention actions. This data generation must be compatible and complementary to databases of damages and losses managed by the countries and the national risk management systems, in order to contribute to progress reports through the monitoring system of the Sendai Framework and count with multisectoral indicators.
 - Also mentioned was the importance of awareness campaigns to the population as a whole and particularly to agricultural producers, who should be empowered both to play an active role in reducing their vulnerability and to demand and follow up on government actions that reduce existing risks and prevent the creation of new risks. In this regard, the idea of promoting an "international year of integrated risk management in the agriculture sector" was mentioned.
 - Finally, it was emphasized that the agriculture sector should play a key role in both the implementation and the monitoring processes related to the Sendai Framework. It should be an active actor in the Disaster Risk Reduction Platforms, as well as in the national and local mechanisms of implementation, monitoring, definition of indicators and reporting within the DRM planning and programming processes.
- **Contribute to DRM with an integrated multisectoral approach:**
 - The importance of considering that vulnerability of the agriculture sector to disasters responds to multiple factors was noted. Therefore it is necessary to work with the other sectors for a comprehensive approach in order to properly achieve the resilience of the agriculture sector.
 - Also noted was that the work of subregional entities facilitates the generation of mandates or initiatives that require an intersectoral approach. An initiative mentioned for replication was the Central American Dry Corridor project, developed by the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE as per Spanish acronym), the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD as per Spanish acronym) and the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC) to present to the Green Climate Fund.
 - In the field of intersectoral work, the importance of creating alliances with research institutions and academia, with the ministries of economics and finance and planning, as well as with the private sector, among others, was mentioned as it plays a very important role in promoting holistic and integrated approaches.
 - There was talk of the importance and avoiding the generation of competition between entities and initiatives and, on the contrary, to consider collaborative and cooperative efforts. Therefore, the RS must link up with existing initiatives, strategies and plans of intergovernmental technical organizations in the region, not only in agriculture but also in DRM, whenever feasible and appropriate. In particular with the Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC as per Spanish acronym); The Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA); The High Level Working Group for DRM of the Union of South American Nations (GTANGRD/UNASUR as per Spanish acronym), the Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities for Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management of the Common Market of the South (REMGIR/MERCOSUR as per Spanish acronym) and the Andean Community of Nations (CAN as per Spanish acronym)
 - It was noted that the costs of disasters go beyond quantifiable costs and that we must take measures to reflect the real costs of the underlying risk factors and their negative impacts,





including social and environmental impacts of both intensive and extensive and slow onset events such as drought.

- Similarly, the importance of contextualizing the particular reality of the hydro-meteorological and climatic phenomena of the region was discussed. For example the Central American Dry Corridor, the effects differentiated by the El Niño Phenomenon, among others, that contribute to increasingly changing threats that occur with greater frequency and magnitude, leading to the use of unsustainable land and natural resources (water, among others) and, consequently, to non-optimal rural conditions and migration processes. These conditions should serve to inform a more risk-sensitive investment as well as incentives and disincentives by the State and alliances with private agricultural enterprises towards a more sustainable and integral rural development.
 - Finally, mention was made of the importance of strengthening DRM and/or climate change (CC) entities of the ministries of agriculture, which in practice are already coordinating actions with the national DRM systems and the ministries of environment. These entities would constitute the pillar that should support the actions of the RS to reflect its action at the national level.
- **Create or promote the development of regional public goods for priority risk management:**
 - The development of information, knowledge and citizen awareness was one of the most mentioned elements and considered central to address the risks that affect the agriculture sector. It was highlighted that, given climate change, there is a lack of adequate information to properly understand, dimension and manage the new risk scenarios.
 - In this regard, the great potential that exists for a regional approach was noted, both for the development of common systems and observatories, and for the development of mechanisms to aid decision-making (public and private). This potential was particularly highlighted in relation to agro-meteorological, sanitary and loss and damage information.
 - To be able to use this potential, the importance of developing harmonized criteria and mechanisms for gathering information between countries, as well as the development of open systems, was stressed.
 - Another important element for the sector representatives was the work on risk transfer mechanisms, for which the potential of a regional approach in the following terms was highlighted: development of subregional catastrophic insurance mechanisms; making countries with small scale markets more attractive for insurers and reinsurers; cross-country risk compensation in subregional spaces for the generation of more affordable premiums for medium and micro level insurance; development and use of regional public information that allows for setting more realistic premiums; etc.
 - Another element that stood out with high potential for a regional approach was the importance of developing common planning and management tools for the use of natural resources and territories of the same characteristics, shared among groups of countries.
 - Finally, the importance of having standardized protocols and mutual aid mechanisms between countries was mentioned to improve risk management and in case of the occurrence of disasters provide an adequate and scaled response to prevent them from turning into major catastrophes.

In terms of implementation entities of the RS, the following were mentioned:

- There was widespread agreement that it is neither necessary nor appropriate to generate a new coordination and implementation body for the RS at this time. On the contrary, it was mentioned that





the RS has much to gain by anchoring and cooperating with entities that already have a certain level of advancement in the area.

- In the case of Mexico and Venezuela, which are currently outside the subregional bodies that make up the ad hoc Technical Committee², it was mentioned that both the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS) and the CAC have a mechanism for including associated countries, not members of the respective coordination spaces, if desired by those.
- It was also recalled that the Technical Committee is ad hoc and, for the time being, is solely tasked with supporting the technical development of the Regional Strategy. Thus, the governance mechanisms that will be required for the implementation of the RS will be analyzed at a later stage in agreement and coordination with CELAC.
- The importance of advancing in phases and adapting the modalities of implementation and coordination was defined, in accordance with the emerging needs in the implementation of the RS.

Finally, other important elements discussed and of interest to the RS are mentioned below:

- It was recalled that one of the conceptual advances brought by the Sendai Framework is the focus on people and how, following the same logic, the development of the RS should prioritize farmers. In particular, the RS will focus especially on male and female farmers who subsist on small-scale and family-based production, without prejudice to other groups who can also benefit from the implementation of RS. This group disproportionately concentrates the negative impacts of disasters and coexists with a much greater degree of vulnerability to disasters and food and nutrition insecurity. In line with this approach, one of the fundamental principles of the RS should be the integration of the gender approach.
- The need to generate conditions and guidelines for countries to integrate family farming into customized insurance schemes was a recurrent concern from the sector representatives. The agricultural insurance scheme in Mexico on the Ignite Stage demonstrated the significant advances that the country has made in this field, as well as the importance of generating exchanges between countries of the region for the development of instruments adapted to the needs of smallholder agriculture.
- Emphasis was placed on the importance for the RS to promote prevention and mitigation of risk through actions in terms of adaptation to climate change, as a key element in addressing the underlying factors of disaster risk in the sector. In this field, the presentation made by Costa Rica on the Ignite Stage was a good example of how a public policy scheme at the country level, towards adaptation to climate change and environmental sustainability, has very positive impact in increasing the resilience of farmers.
- Participants also highlighted the importance of rehabilitating and rebuilding better after a disaster incorporating DRM criteria. In this field, the presentation by Ecuador on the Ignite Stage showed how the post-disaster stage constitutes an opportunity to reach the producers, improving their productive systems and making them more resilient.
- The integration and coordination between levels of government and/or with the participation of unions, producer associations and the producers themselves at the farm level were addressed as important elements for the success of DRM in the sector. Likewise, it was emphasized agriculture, like no other sector, require a true alliance of all members of society in order to increase the resilience of farmers and thus be able to guarantee the FSN of the LAC nations.

² This committee has been created to advance the contents of the Regional Strategy and is made up of one representative per sub-region (4) and four subregional organizations: CAC, CDEMA, CAS and CAN.





Participants from the agriculture sector and panelists³

- **Hugo Rossi**, Undersecretary of Political Coordination, Ministry of Agroindustry of Argentina;
- **Javier Caniggia Bengolea**, National Director of Agricultural Emergencies and Disasters, Ministry of Agroindustry of Argentina;
- **Camilo Navarro**, Executive Director of Agro-insurance and National Coordination of Integral Risk Management of the Ministry of Agriculture of Chile;
- **Ricardo Toro**, Director of the National Emergency Office of Chile;
- **Samuel Zambrano Cañizales**, Vice Minister of Agricultural Affairs of Colombia;
- **Manuel Jiménez**, Coordinator of the Technical Group on Climate Change and Comprehensive Risk Management of the Central American Agricultural Council;
- **Fernando Vargas Pérez**, Fernando Vargas Pérez, National Director of Agricultural Extension, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica;
- **Gerson Martínez**, Minister of Public Works of El Salvador and Representative of the Presidency Pro Tempore of CELAC;
- **Carlos Noboa Gordon**, General Coordinator of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fisheries of Ecuador;
- **Arnoux Séverin**, Deputy Minister-General of the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development of Haiti;
- **Donovan Stanberry**, Deputy Minister Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, Trade, Agriculture and Fisheries of Jamaica;
- **Víctor Celaya del Toro**, National Director of Attention to Climate Change, Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food of Mexico;
- **Juan Carlos Baruja**, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Paraguay; and
- **Santiago Bertoni**, President of the Paraguayan Institute of Agrarian Technology, Paraguay.

Detail of the activities carried out

Side Event: Presentation of the Regional Strategy for DRM in the Agriculture Sector and FSN in LAC

The event began with welcoming remarks by Minister Gerson Martínez, representing the pro-tempore presidency of CELAC. Since it is in response to its expressed request that FAO and UNISDR initiated the process of development of the RS.

Camilo Navarro, representative of the Ministry of Agriculture of Chile, who is acting as technical facilitator for the development of the RS, then briefly presented the structure and main guidelines of the strategy.

The high level panel followed, where participants mentioned elements related to the opportunities that an instrument of this type provide for the resilience sustainable development of the sector and ratified their support for the process of developing the RS.

This event was widely attended by at least 150 participants from a broad range of organizations.

Presentations on the Ignite Stage

³ In alphabetical order of countries and organizations



With the aim of sharing noteworthy DRM experiences implemented by the agriculture sector in LAC, there were three outstanding presentations as follows:

- **Strengthening the resilience of the smallholder farmers to hydro-meteorological phenomena caused by climate change**, Fernando Vargas Pérez, National Director of Agricultural Extension, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Costa Rica.
- **Insurance schemes for smallholder farmers in Mexico**, Víctor Celaya del Toro, National Director of Attention to Climate Change, Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food, Mexico.
- **Strategies from the agriculture sector in the face of Ecuador's earthquake of April 16, 2016**, Carlos Noboa Gordon, General Coordinator of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fisheries, Ecuador.

Working meeting of the delegates of the agriculture sector on the RS

Taking advantage of the presence of 13 high-level delegates from the agriculture sector, representing 11 countries in the region, a working meeting was held to generate inputs for the ad hoc Technical Committee responsible for drafting the first RS.

This session was facilitated by Manuel Jiménez, Coordinator of the technical group on Climate Change and Comprehensive Risk Management of CAC, who has extensive experience in the development of regional processes.

Meeting of the sector delegates with Robert Glasser, Special Representative to the United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction

Mr. Glasser emphasized the relevance of such a regional initiative which will allow the development of the RS and was very pleased to have such a large delegation from a non-traditional sector in the Regional Platforms.

This meeting primarily addressed the progress made in existing sectoral DRM initiatives in the different countries and elements related to what the different delegates of the sector expect the RS to contribute.

Communiqué of the Presidency Pro Tempore of CELAC - El Salvador on DRM in the Agriculture Sector and FSN in LAC

This communiqué was read by Gerson Martínez, Minister of Public Works of El Salvador and Representative of the Presidency Pro Tempore of CELAC, who emphasized the high level impact of disasters affecting the agriculture sector in the region, the great potential that this sector has for increasing resilience and the need for specific instruments to adequately address DRM in a strategic and effective manner. He also recalled the commitment of the pro-tempore presidency of CELAC to this agenda and urged the different countries and actors of DRM to work together towards the development of the RS.