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# DRAFT RESOLUTION

# COORDINATION OF VOLUNTEERS IN THE HEMISPHERE IN RESPONSE TO DISASTERS AND THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER AND POVERTY – WHITE HELMETS INITIATIVE

(Agreed upon by the Permanent Council at the virtual meeting held on November 4, 2021,   
and referred to the Plenary of the General Assembly for consideration)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

HAVING SEEN the reports of the General Secretariat on the White Helmets Initiative, resolutions AG/RES. 1351 (XXV-O/95), AG/RES. 1403 (XXVI-O/96), AG/RES. 1463 (XXVII-O/97), AG/RES. 2018 (XXXIV-O/04), AG/RES. 2165 (XXXVI-O/06), AG/RES. 2372 (XXXVIII-O/08), AG/RES. 2558 (XL-O/10), AG/RES. 2704 (XLII-O/12), AG/RES. 2827 (XLIV-O/14), AG/RES. 2881 (XLVI-O/16), AG/RES. 2904 (XLVII-O/17), CIDI/RES. 322 (LXXIII-O/17), AG/RES. 2915 (XLVIII-O/18), and declarations AG/DEC. 45 (XXXV-O/05) and AG/DEC. 55 (XXXVII-O/07);

REAFFIRMING the commitment to the guiding principles of international humanitarian assistance, namely, humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and operational independence; and the primary and foremost responsibility of the state to prevent and reduce disaster risk and to assist and protect disaster victims;

BEARING IN MIND that the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 recognizes the need for a broader and more people-centered preventive approach to disaster risk and that disaster risk reduction contributes to sustainable development;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015;

BEARING IN MIND the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development 2016-2021 (PIDS), adopted by resolution AG/RES. 2882 (XLVI-O/16), and the Inter-American Plan for Disaster Prevention and Response and the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, adopted by resolution AG/RES. 2750 (XLII-O/12);

RECALLING the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction held in May 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland;

HIGHLIGHTING the progress made by member states and international, regional and subregional agencies, organs and organizations in the area of disaster prevention and response and in the coordination of humanitarian assistance;

EMPHASIZING the growing multicausal hazards, especially those related to climate change and the need for humanitarian and development action to include climate change adaptation as part of an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and resilience;

EXPRESSING concern about the current situation in the region, where phenomena aggravated by climate change, especially the recurring drought and the annual hurricane season experienced in the region, must be added to the aggravated consequences of environmental degradation, making humanitarian assistance, to groups in vulnerable situations, more necessary than ever, with a gender perspective and a rights-based approach;

HIGHLIGHTING that the global health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is generating an enormous impact on the most vulnerable populations, making it critical to reinforce the values of solidarity, multilateralism, equality, equity, inclusion and non-discrimination, with the aim of leaving no one behind;

CALLING UPON member states, agencies of the inter-American system, international, regional and subregional organizations, and other hemispheric actors to continue fostering the promotion and protection of all human rights and to prevent all forms of violence, in particular sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian activities, guaranteeing equitable and inclusive assistance, especially for those who are displaced or in particular situations of vulnerability among others and strengthening the active role of affected communities, as well as accountability to ensure the quality of the response;

RECOGNIZING that it is an essential requirement, for humanitarian responses to be effective, to consider the specific characteristics of all the affected population segments, including women and girls, as agents of strengthening resilience to disaster risks and climate change;

UNDERSCORING the role of volunteers and humanitarian personnel in the different stages of disaster risk reduction, considering the importance of such actors for preventing, mitigating and responding to emergencies and humanitarian crises at the regional level;

BEARING IN MIND the need to consider in public policies on disaster risk reduction the local and indigenous knowledge, its practices and organizational forms, as well as the peoples of African descent and other ethnic groups;

HIGHLIGHTING ALSO that it is essential to promote and strengthen local capacities, the effective participation of community organizations, and the integration of civil society, so that potential victims become actors in disaster prevention, preparedness and response and, consequently, transform their own reality;

RECOGNIZING the need for the public and private sectors, as well as academia and scientific and research institutions, to work together more closely and create opportunities for cooperation in the regional humanitarian sphere;

CONFIRMING the importance of continuing to promote regional, subregional, national, and local measures for disaster prevention and response, according priority to groups in vulnerable situations, such as women, children, older people, and persons with disabilities, among others;

REITERATING the need to continue carrying out disaster risk reduction operations, avoiding duplication of efforts, encouraging resource optimization through the use of existing coordination tools, and promoting synergy among humanitarian efforts in the region;

RECALLING FURTHER that the White Helmets Initiative continues to carry out its activities through a working model based on cooperation, solidarity, community-based participation, and promotion of sustainable communities; that it is entirely civilian and relies on a volunteer corps; that this Initiative acts at the request of the affected country or in response to an appeal for international humanitarian assistance and provides its support as a response to disasters and crises, as well as in rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development efforts. It also promotes prevention, disaster risk management, and resilience;

HIGHLIGHTING the agreements and memorandums of understanding that White Helmets signed in the area of international humanitarian assistance in 2018 and 2021 with the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Panama in support of the Regional Logistics Center for Humanitarian Assistance (CLRAH), the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management of the Republic of Colombia, and the Emergency Operations Center of the Dominican Republic, and the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, among others;

EXPRESSING SATISFACTION at the humanitarian assistance provided by the White Helmets Initiative through missions to send volunteers and/or humanitarian supplies to Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago as a result of humanitarian crises, hurricanes Eta and Iota, and the COVID-19 pandemic;

CALLING FOR increased collaboration between the White Helmets and the Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America and the Dominican Republic (CEPREDENAC), the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Assistance (CAPRADE), and the Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities for Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management (RMAGIR), as well as with other regional bodies involved in disaster risk reduction and coordination of humanitarian assistance; and

RECOGNIZING that the actions undertaken by the White Helmets Initiative are in alignment with the principles of the Charter of the Organization of American States, are carried out at the request of the affected state and in close collaboration with its relevant national authorities, and are governed by the principles of international human rights law and international humanitarian law,

RESOLVES:

1. To reiterate its support for the White Helmets Initiative as one of the invaluable mechanisms in the Hemisphere for prevention, reduction, and response to disasters and in the fight against hunger and poverty.
2. To encourage the White Helmets Initiative to continue fostering the growing regional humanitarian collaboration and, in that framework, to continue sharing its experience, lessons learned and best practices in the areas of disaster prevention, preparedness, and response; resilience, and promotion of sustainable communities.
3. To encourage the General Secretariat to continue strengthening and coordinating action between the White Helmets Initiative and the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI), as well as with other bodies and mechanisms of the Organization of American States, facilitating the establishment of partnerships and working agreements between other organizations and institutions in the region and the White Helmets Initiative.
4. To entrust the General Secretariat and the White Helmets Initiative with the task of continuing to explore joint humanitarian assistance activities in member states that so request.
5. To reiterate the invitation to those member states that consider it appropriate to make contributions to the OAS-White Helmets Humanitarian Fund, so they can continue seminars and training workshops on disaster risk reduction and the execution of capacity-building projects in areas related to resilience, disaster risk prevention and mitigation, promotion of sustainable communities, and international humanitarian assistance.
6. To request the General Secretariat to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third regular session on the implementation of this resolution. Execution of the activities envisaged in this resolution will be subject to the availability of financial resources in the program-budget of the Organization and other resources.

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