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REPORT OF THE CHAIR ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY ON

TOOLS AND ENTITIES OF THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM

TO ADDRESS NATURAL DISASTER RESPONSE

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In November 2019, the Chair of the Inter‐American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), entrusted the Committee on Partnership for Development Policies (Committee on Policies) with analyzing document CIDI/CPD/doc.188/19, “Tools and Entities of the Inter-American System to Address Natural Disaster Response. Study” (hereafter, the Study), prepared by the Department of Social Development of the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) in fulfillment of the following General Assembly mandates:

* AG/RES. 2939 (XLIX-O/19): operative paragraph 11. “Building on the mandate established by paragraph 13 of resolution [AG/RES. 2916 (XLVIII -0/18,](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/ENGLISH/HIST_18/CIDIS00003S02.doc) to instruct SEDI to conduct – in coordination with the relevant areas of the OAS and the Inter-American system, in particular the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security (SMS) and the Committee on Hemispheric Security (CSH) – a study, within available resources, of existing tools and entities established within the inter-American system to address natural disaster response, and to report such findings to a joint meeting of the Permanent Council and CIDI by the end of 2019. The study shall include: (1) the future structure, responsibilities, and membership of the Inter-American Committee for Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR); (2) the future of the [Inter-American Emergency Aid Fund] FONDEM, specifically whether it should be abolished or replaced with an instrument that can facilitate the orderly and timely transfer of post-disaster assistance between member states and affected countries; (3) the future of the Inter-American Convention on the Facilitation of Disaster Assistance; (4) the Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation (INDM); and (5) the experiences of member states that have been affected in engaging with these entities.”
* [AG/RES. 2916 (XLVIII-0/18)](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/ENGLISH/HIST_18/CIDIS00003S02.doc): operative paragraph 13. “To instruct Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) to present for consideration by the CIDI, a proposal to facilitate, as resources permit, the response to disasters and to strengthen the collaborative provision of assistance by member states, permanent observers and other entities to member states affected by disasters, with a view to aligning and optimizing the use of all existing instruments and mechanisms of the OAS; strengthening coordination and collaboration within the framework of the instruments and entities of the inter-American system and sub-regional mechanisms; and functioning in a coordinated manner with existing mechanisms and agencies of the United Nations (UN) System and other international entities.”

At the meeting held on November 20, the Committee on Policies, discovering that the Study did not fulfill the mandate set forth in operative paragraph 11 of resolution AG/RES. 2939 (XLIX-O/19), as it had not been prepared “…in coordination with the relevant areas of the OAS and the Inter-American system, ...” granted more time for the Secretariat to undertaken that coordination.

A revised version of the Study, document [CIDI/CPD/doc.188/19 rev. 1,](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/doc.&classNum=188&lang=e) was submitted on December 16, 2019. Its purpose was to provide member states with a description of the current status of the tools and entities of the system; the challenges to using them effectively; the rationale for including changes in their functions and structure; and options for enhancing the role of the Organization of American States in building capacity for disaster preparedness and response, as well as in facilitating international response.

The member states agreed to review each of the tools and entities included in the Study one by one, in order to decide on the relevant recommendations that would be submitted to the Inter-American Council for Integral Development for consideration, and to conduct the analysis, the Committee on Policies used the following methodology, which was agreed upon at a meeting held on January 30, 2020:

* The Secretariat made subsequent presentations on each tool and entity included in the Study, at formal meetings of the Committee. The presentations were an item on the order of business of the meeting, where it was discussed. The presentations were made by representatives of all areas of the Secretariat involved with the operation of each tool or entity and were intended to answer the following questions as well as others that arose during the discussions:
* Background
* How does the tool/entity currently operate?
* How many times has it gone into operation in the last five years in disaster situations?
* What benefits would the adoption of the changes suggested in the Study bring?

In the case of the Inter-American Emergency Aid Fund (FONDEM):

* Which countries have made contributions in recent years?
* The Committee held several meetings, both formal and informal. The formal meeting included presentations by the Secretariat on a given tool/entity referred to in the Study. That was followed by an informal meeting at which delegations reviewed the information received from the Secretariat and advanced discussions on recommendations for the tool/entity with a view to adopting it at the next formal meeting.
* At the same formal meeting, after agreement was reached in the discussions on the tool/entity in question, information was received from the Secretariat on the next tool/entity referred to in the Study; and so on.

All elements of the Study were thus revised until agreement was reached on the recommendations for each and, as an overall package, on all of them.

The Policy Committee studied following tools available in the inter-American system to deal with natural disasters response, which are referred to in the Study under consideration:

* The Inter-American Emergency Aid Fund (FONDEM)
* Inter-American Convention to Facilitate Disaster Assistance
* Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR) and
* The Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation (INDM)

It is important to note that moving the work of the Committee forward involved the support and participation of the member states’ representatives on the Permanent Council Committee on Hemispheric Security and the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security, as well as representatives of the following areas of the General Secretariat and entities of the inter-American system during the discussions on:

FONDEM (January 30, 2020):

* Executive Secretariat for Integral Development – Department of Integral Development
* Secretariat for Administration and Finance – Department of Financial Services
* Secretariat for Legal Affairs – Department of Legal Services

The Inter-American Convention to Facilitate Disaster Assistance (February 18, 2020):

* Executive Secretariat for Integral Development – Department of Integral Development
* Secretariat for Legal Affairs – Department of International Law

The Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR) (March 3, 2020):

* Assistant Secretary General of the OAS
* Inter-American Defense Board
* Pan American Development Foundation
* Inter-American Commission of Women

The Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation (INDM) (June 9, 2020):

* Executive Secretariat for Integral Development - Department of Sustainable Development
* Inter-American Defense Board

The Policies Committee's original intention was to complete its work on the Study by April 2020, but delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic rendered this impossible. Besides, a few more informal meetings than originally scheduled needed to be held. By September 11, 2020, the individual review of each tool was completed and the recommendations regarding each tool were broadly adopted. It should be noted that the Chair of the IACNDR – the OAS Assistant Secretary General – and the Secretariat for Legal Affairs were both consulted on the recommended amendments to the Statutes of the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR), to ensure that they were in keeping with institutional regulations and procedures.

The Policies Committee's recommendations on each tool are as follows:

1. REGARDING THE INTER-AMERICAN EMERGENCY AID FUND (FONDEM)

With respect to the Inter-American Emergency Aid Fund (FONDEM), the member states reviewed the Fund’s performance, limitations, and possible ambiguities in its current Statutes, and considered possibilities for improving its performance and impact in support of the role of the Organization of American States and its General Secretariat in international response to disasters affecting OAS member states.

Based on the “Tools and Entities of the Inter-American System to Address Natural Disaster Response” [CIDI/CPD/doc.188/19 rev. 1, section 1: Inter-American Emergency Aid Fund (FONDEM)] and the information the Secretariat provided in document CIDI/CPD/INF.41/20, the member states:

* Have come to the conclusion that the FONDEM Statutes do not pose any barriers to the receipt of funds or the use of resources, and that no changes to the Statutes are required;
* Are of the view that to maximize the impact of FONDEM as a disaster response instrument, the OAS General Secretariat will strengthen, *inter alia*, the scope, management, and promotion of FONDEM;
* Recommend that the OAS General Secretariat actively promote FONDEM and invite member states, permanent observers, other states, international organizations, foundations, nongovernmental entities, public or private enterprises, and individuals to make financial contributions to it.

1. REGARDING THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION TO FACILITATE DISASTER ASSISTANCE

With regard to the Inter-American Convention to Facilitate Disaster Assistance, it was noted that since its adoption other instruments had been adopted and other more current actions on the subject had been agreed upon. Queries were made about the possibility of block accession by Caribbean States, to which the OAS Department of International Law explained that the Convention is a treaty between States; however, it said that Article 16 of the Convention refers to other actors, so possible avenues could be explored. The member states adopted the following recommendation:

Urge states that are not parties to accede to the Inter-American Convention to Facilitate Disaster Assistance.

1. REGARDING THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION (IACNDR)

With regard to the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR), information was provided about the functioning of the Committee; what it has been able to accomplish in terms of the purposes for which it was created; whether it could do more; whether its purposes and activities should be reviewed; and the benefits of expanding its membership. Finally, the member states agreed to recommend the following amendments to the Committee’s Statutes:

Amended **Article 2** (This paragraph should be moved to become the second paragraph in Article 2)

The IACNDR also seeks to harmonize efforts and to facilitate the exchange of information on the actions taken and ongoing, as well as on the response plans of the institutions of the inter-American system, sub-regional and international partners, OAS member states, and permanent observers, in response to natural and other disasters.

Strike **Article 4** (Strike Article 4 and re-order the chapters)

Amended **Article 6 (e)**

**Invite member states** with voice but without vote and, when necessary, invite permanent observers and representatives of national, subregional, regional, and international organizations and mechanisms to participate in IACNDR meetings with voice but without vote.[[1]](#footnote-1)/

**Article 6 (f)**

Submit an annual report on its activities to the Permanent Council.

Amended **Article 6 (g)**

Assist in coordinating the cooperation among OAS member states, when invited to do so by the interested parties, and assist states affected by a natural disaster in notifying OCHA.

**Article 6 (i)**

Manage voluntary contributions for the purposes envisaged in these Statutes and in accordance with Article 14.

**Article 12**

The IACNDR shall meet at the headquarters of the OAS General Secretariat, except when it decides on an alternative venue or format for any of its meetings, which could be virtual.

**Article 14**

The IACNDR, through the Secretary General and without prejudice to its members' individual competencies, shall solicit voluntary contributions from member states, permanent observer states to the Organization, and other United Nations member states, as well as from public or private, national or international persons or entities, and/or shall seek to establish the necessary specific funds and trusts, in accordance with the General Standards to Govern the Operations of the General Secretariat of the Organization to assist the member states of the OAS, in accordance with Article 2.

1. REGARDING THE INTER-AMERICAN NETWORK FOR DISASTER MITIGATION (INDM)

The Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation (INDM) includes three components: the virtual forum, the hemispheric meetings, and the online database – the latter being the only set of archives in the Western Hemisphere to contain disaster mitigation information authorized by the Governments of the OAS member states. The Policy Committee recommends as follows:

1. The database platform should be updated continuously to maximize its performance with available up-to-date technology. The database is in the process of migration to a new platform that will facilitate access to information and instant updates.
2. The OAS database must be visible, easily accessible, and user-friendly to OAS member states and their regional and international partners responsible for natural disaster management.
3. The database should be given a name to ensure that it can be easily found on the OAS website.
4. Continue to hold hemispheric meetings, as the member states deem necessary.
5. Invite member states to register and update their national natural disaster authorities or focal points.
6. Urge the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB) and the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) to continue efforts to ensure that the information contained in the OAS database is updated and available to the natural disaster response community.
7. Continue to strengthen cooperation with regional and international partners and encourage them to continue contributing as much information as possible, so as to ensure that useful and critical information on natural disasters is kept in the online database, to serve all countries in the Hemisphere.
8. Urge member states to do yearly updates of the national information they give SEDI and the IADB for inclusion in the OAS online database on natural disasters.

With the task given by the CIDI Chair to conduct the analysis now fulfilled, it would remain for CIDI to endorse these recommendations and to also execute the second part of the mandate contained in paragraph 11 of resolution AG/RES. 2939 (XLIX-O/19), “to instruct SEDI... to report such findings to a joint meeting of the Permanent Council and CIDI....”

As I finish off this report, I must thank all the representatives of the member states of the Organization of American States, whose painstaking work and input have enabled us to advance the effort to strengthen and streamline the OAS response to natural disasters. I also wish to express my gratitude to the Assistant Secretary General and the Secretariat’s units, especially SEDI’s Department of Sustainable Development and Policies Section, for the collaboration received in undertaking this task, and would also like to recognize and thank the Inter-American Defense Board.

Lilia A. Sánchez de Morehead

Alternate Representative of the Dominican Republic

to the OAS

Chair of the Committee on Partnership-for-Development Policies

APPENDIX

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

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| --- | --- |
| Tools and Entities of the Inter-American System to Address Natural Disaster Response. STUDY. [as per AG/RES. 2939 (XLIX-O/19), par. 11]. | CIDI/CPD/doc.188/19:  <http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2020/DESASTREING.docx>  <http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2020/DESASTREESP.docx>  <http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2020/DESASTREPOR.docx>  <http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2020/DESASTREFRA.docx> |
| Tools and Entities of the Inter-American System to Address Natural Disaster Response. STUDY. [as per AG/RES. 2939 (XLIX-O/19), par. 11]. | CIDI/CPD/ doc.188/19 rev.1:  [**Español**](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/doc.&classNum=188&lang=s) **-** [**English**](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/doc.&classNum=188&lang=e) **-** [**Français**](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/doc.&classNum=188&lang=f) ***-*** [**Português**](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/doc.&classNum=188&lang=p) |
| Procedure for Considering the Study on Tools and Entities of the Inter-American System to Address Natural Disaster Response (adopted by the Committee at its meeting of January 30, 2020) | CIDI/CPD/doc.191/20:  [**Español**](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/doc.&classNum=191&lang=s)[**English**](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/doc.&classNum=191&lang=e)[**French**](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/doc.&classNum=191&lang=f)[**Portuguese**](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/doc.&classNum=191&lang=p) |
| AG/RES. 2183 (XXXVI-O/06) Adoption of the Amended Statutes of the Inter-American Emergency Aid Fund (adopted at the fourth plenary session, held on June 6, 2006) | <http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2020/FONDEMSTAT.docx>  <http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2020/FONDEMEST.docx> |
| Summary of Questions Posed by the Delegations and Answers. Review of FONDEM during the Meeting of the Committee held January 30, 2020 | CIDI/CPD/INF.41/20  [**English**](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/INF.&classNum=41&lang=e)[**Español**](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/INF.&classNum=41&lang=s)[**French**](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/INF.&classNum=41&lang=f)[**Portuguese**](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/INF.&classNum=41&lang=p) |
| Text of the Inter-American Convention to Facilitate Disaster Assistance. | <https://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-54.html> |
| Status of signatures and ratifications of the Inter-American Convention to Facilitate Disaster Assistance | <http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/Sigs/a-54.html> |
| Meetings of the IACNDR Convened by the Office of the Assistant Secretary General in Response to Large-Scale Disaster Emergencies (April 2020) | CIDI/CPD/INF.48/20  [Español](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/INF.&classNum=48&lang=s)  [English](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/INF.&classNum=48&lang=e) [Français](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/INF.&classNum=48&lang=f)   [Portuguese](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/INF.&classNum=48&lang=p) |
| International Emergency Response Mechanisms | CIDI/CPD/INF.46/20  [Verbatim](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=cidi/cpd/inf.&classNum=46&lang=t) |
| Presentation by the Assistant Secretary General of the OAS | [**CIDI/CPD/INF.43/20**](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/INF.&classNum=43&lang=t) |
| Presentation by the Inter-American Defense Board | [**CIDI/CPD/INF.44/20**](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/INF.&classNum=44&lang=t) |
| Recommendations on the Study on Tools and Entities of the Inter-American System to Address Natural Disaster Response. | CIDI/CPD/doc.200/20 rev. 3  [Español](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/doc.&classNum=200&lang=s) | [English](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CIDI/CPD/doc.&classNum=200&lang=e) |

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1. . Said organizations could include the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Andean Development Corporation (CAF), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), White Helmets Initiative, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC), Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Relief (CAPRADE), and the MERCOSUR Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management (RMAGIR); [↑](#footnote-ref-1)