

## DECLARATION OF PANAMA

### **V REGIONAL MEETING ON THE INTERNATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (MIAH)**

The Latin American and Caribbean countries participating in the V Regional Meeting on the International Mechanism for Humanitarian Assistance in Latin America and the Caribbean, MIAH, under the theme "Jointly Strengthening Humanitarian Action", held in Panama City, Panama, from the 28th to 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2012 and the representatives of Sub-regional agencies that are linked to the integrated management of disaster risks.

Reaffirming the guiding principles of International Humanitarian Assistance of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, the State's primary responsibility of caring for victims of disasters and the central role of the United Nations leading the coordination of the international community as provided in the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions of 46/182 and 58/114, and the guidelines for risk reduction and preparedness and response established in the Hyogo Framework; recognizing the role of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs OCHA in its promotion;

In recognition of the strong support and efforts of all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, the sub regional mechanisms, the international organizations and civil society whose contribution have been vital to achieving concrete progress in humanitarian assistance;

Highlighting the actions of the sub-regional Agencies, whose work in humanitarian assistance and cooperation as one of the pillars of integrated disaster risk management, such as CAPRADE, CDEMA, CEPREDENAC and REHU, members of the Forum on Cooperation and Coordination of the Sub-Regional Risk Management Mechanisms in the Americas, and those countries which do not formally belong to these organizations, but contribute actively to the fulfillment of its objectives;

Reaffirming also the Report and three Declarations adopted in México 2008, Brazil 2009, Argentina 2010 and Ecuador 2011, on international mechanisms for humanitarian assistance in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Recognizing that the process generated by the Regional Meetings on the International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance has allowed for more efficient coordination among humanitarian actors in the region, both at the national, sub regional, regional, and global levels.

Stressing the need to consolidate and strengthen the process generated by the Regional Meetings on the International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance in Latin America and the Caribbean, which celebrating its fifth year has become an appropriate forum in the region to discuss and agree on actions that can lead to improved coordination among the various humanitarian actors at national, sub regional, regional and global levels;

Welcoming the establishment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) by the Heads of State and Government of the region during the Unity Summit held in Cancun, Mexico in February 2010, and its initiation at the Caracas Summit on December 2011; and the indication that humanitarian assistance to states experiencing crises caused by natural or other hazards in is a fundamental part of its Action plan working

Highlighting the strong support received from international and regional organizations, as well as governments of friendly countries and of civil society that have joined the countries and sub regions in implementing humanitarian Assistance and disaster risk reduction actions,

Considering that the mechanisms of Humanitarian Assistance should be closely integrated with national and regional risk management processes, to promote a more holistic approach.

Welcoming the establishment of the regional Donors Technical Group as an initiative to establish a forum for dialogue that enhance coordination and complementarity of the donors with the humanitarian community within the region.

Considering that there is still an urgent need to strengthen the actions for coordination of humanitarian assistance due to the constant and exponential occurrence of phenomena that impact the region,

Considering that in order to strengthen the initiatives that have resulted from previous MIAH meetings, it is necessary to establish a Plan of Action that groups the activities for follow-up in order to achieve the commitments. This plan will be based on issues such as, legal frameworks, mobilization of resources for the integrated management of risk and participation, strengthening the humanitarian coordination at the national, sub regional, regional and international levels and the management of information.

And in consideration of those items expressed and accepted by the participants of the V Regional Meeting on the International Mechanism for Humanitarian Assistance in Latin America and the Caribbean;

#### **AGREE TO:**

1. Approve the attached action plan, which is an integral part of this declaration, while requesting that those responsible for its execution undertake the actions necessary to achieve this utilizing the requisite support of the government departments and intergovernmental agencies and inviting international cooperation partners to direct their support and endorsement for these actions.

2. Invite governments to provide political support to consolidate the process of the Regional Meetings on the International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance in Latin America and the Caribbean, as a dynamic forum in Latin America and the Caribbean for

the establishment of coordination and cooperation of humanitarian efforts among national, sub regional and regional levels taking into account the international levels, considering pre-existing policies and mechanisms in the Americas.

3. Encourage the strengthening of the follow-up group, as the entity responsible for monitoring and tracking of commitments made during MIAH's regional meetings and to report periodically on progress for the preparation of upcoming MIAH meetings.

4. Request that governments continue making efforts to consolidate official risk management structures, specifically those responsible for Humanitarian Assistance at the national, regional, and international levels.

5. Request sub regional Agencies to continue to direct actions to develop mechanisms, tools and harmonized procedures, fostering the exchange of experiences in the field of humanitarian assistance, as part of the comprehensive management actions for the integrated management of disaster risk; strengthening official structures at national and regional levels.

6. Invite international agencies and organizations to continue providing support for the implementation of programs and projects at local, national, regional and international levels that consolidate humanitarian assistance mechanisms.

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7. Strengthen the synergies between the efforts of governments, regional institutions and organizations, and international organizations and civil society to improve coordination amongst them, to avoid duplication of efforts and optimize resources for the coordination of humanitarian assistance and to support the action plan.

8. Request the Follow-up Group to compile all the tools established in the process of the regional meetings of the MIAHs and regularly update the information and make the tools available to all countries and actors interested in applying them with the support of the Follow-up Group and the participation of the pertinent entities, international humanitarian organizations and civil society representatives.

9. Support the early establishment of a Regional Logistics Center for Humanitarian Assistance for the Americas in the Republic of Panama to allow for greater efficiency and management of regional and international humanitarian supplies, for fast and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance in emergency situations in the region, an initiative endorsed at the XXXVIII Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Countries of the Central American Integration System, SICA.

10. That the conclusions of this V Regional Meeting of International mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance be transmitted to the Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC so they can be submitted to the considerations of the Heads of State and Government during the First CELAC Summit to be held on 27 and 28 January in the Republic of Chile.



11. Initiate coordination among the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Community of Latin-American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the Follow-up Group of International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance in Latin America and the Caribbean process to study the possibility of a future association between CELAC and this Forum.

11. Explore discussions for the hosting in the Caribbean the VI Regional Meeting on the International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2013.

12. Thank the Government of the Republic of Panama, the organizers and the Panamanian people, for their hospitality and the successful completion of the V Regional Meeting on the International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Panama City, Panama, March 30, 2012.