

High Level Meeting on Disaster Response and Response Preparedness in Central America

28 February – 2 March 2006
Guatemala City

1. Objectives

The meeting will focus on aspects of disaster management related to OCHA's mandate. Its overall objective is to promote the improvement and strengthening of disaster response capacity and response preparedness in Central America.

The specific objectives of the meeting are threefold: a) analyse and draw lessons from the response to the 2005 tropical hurricane season, highlighting achievements, b) recommend concrete measures to overcome current difficulties and incorporate them in a high-level declaration to be made at the end of the meeting, and c) recommend response preparedness measures for the 2006 tropical hurricane season.

2. Concrete outcomes

a) A strong political message emphasizing the need to continue improving and strengthening disaster response and response preparedness at local, national and regional level. This will be achieved by means of a press conference and if possible, a high-level resolution in writing.

b) A framework for collaboration between SICA¹/CEPREDENAC² and OCHA in the field of disaster response and response preparedness.

c) A follow up mechanism in the region is being discussed.

3. Participation

The countries that will participate are Belize, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama, all of which are members of SICA. Mexico will be invited as an observer of CEPREDENAC and given the impact it sustained during the 2005 hurricane season.

Participants include the heads of the national entities in charge of disaster management, the UN Resident Coordinators in the region, the representatives of UN regional offices and of the regional office of IFRC, and representatives of the main bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies, national Red Cross societies, national associations of municipalities, international and national NGOs involved in humanitarian work, and the private sector. The ERC and officials from participating countries are to take part in the High-Level Meeting on 2 March. The meeting will be followed by a press conference.

¹ Integration System for Central America

² Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America

4. Proceedings

The first two days of the meeting (28 February, 1 st March) will be dedicated to highlighting what worked well in the response to the hurricane season last year, identifying the obstacles encountered, and formulating recommendations for the next hurricane season and the strengthening of response mechanisms in place. The meeting will culminate in a high-level meeting and a press conference on the third day.

5. Preliminary Work

Country and regional analyses of key topics related to disaster response and response preparedness will be prepared prior to the meeting to serve as a basis for the discussion and will be summarized well in advance so that consultations can take place before the meeting and key recommendations be used as inputs for the ministerial declaration. This process will be placed under the overall coordination of the RO in Panama and CEPREDENAC, and will require the participation of the UN Country Teams, specifically the UN Disaster Management Teams and the supporting UN Emergency Technical Teams (UNETE).

6. Meeting of ERC with UN Resident Coordinators and UN Regional Offices

This meeting will take place on 2 March in the afternoon.

7. Organization

This event is being organised in cooperation with the Government of Guatemala and SICA/CEPREDENAC.