



**PCGIR**  
Política Centroamericana  
de Gestión Integral de Riesgo de Desastres



**CEPREDENAC**



# CENTRAL AMERICAN POLICY ON COMPREHENSIVE DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT IN CENTRAL AMERICA -PCGIR-



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## Glossary of Acronyms

<b>CCAD</b>	Central American Commission for Environment and Development
<b>CC-SICA</b>	Consultative Committee of the Central American Integration System
<b>CCVAH</b>	Council of Ministers of Housing and Human Settlements
<b>CECC</b>	Central American Educational and Cultural Coordination
<b>CEPREDENAC</b>	Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America
<b>COMISCA</b>	Council of Ministers of Health of Central America
<b>CRRH</b>	Regional Water Resources Committee
<b>CSUCA</b>	Superior Central American University Council
<b>ECADERT</b>	Central American Strategy for Territorial Rural Development
<b>ECAGIRH</b>	Central American Strategy for Integrated Water Resource Management
<b>EDAN</b>	Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis
<b>ERA</b>	Regional Agro-Environmental and Health Strategy 2009-2024
<b>FEMICA</b>	Federation of Municipalities of the Central American Isthmus
<b>HFA</b>	Hyogo Framework for Action
<b>ICAP</b>	Public Administration Central American Institute
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MEC REG</b>	The Central American Regional Mechanism for Mutual Assistance in Case of Disaster
<b>ODECA</b>	Organization of Central American States
<b>PACAGIRH</b>	Action Plan for Integrated Water Management in the Central American Isthmus
<b>PARCA</b>	Central American Environmental Plan
<b>PCGIR</b>	Central American Policy on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management
<b>PRRD</b>	Regional Disaster Reduction Plan
<b>REDLAC</b>	Risk, Emergency and Disaster Task Force Inter-Agency Workgroup for Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>SE-CEPREDENAC</b>	Executive Secretariat of Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America
<b>SG-SICA</b>	General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System
<b>SICA</b>	Central American Integration System
<b>SIECA</b>	Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration
<b>SISCA</b>	Secretariat for Central American Social Integration

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## Preface PCGIR

The Central American Integration System (SICA) is proud to present the Central American Policy on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management in Central America (PCGIR), approved on June 30, 2010 at the XXXV Ordinary Meeting of SICA Heads of State and Government. This policy is a clear example of synergies leading to a vision of integral development in our countries.

The policy is a fundamental guide to promote and achieve changes in the form of planning and orienting processes for Disaster Risk Reduction in Investment for Sustainable Economic Development; in Development and social compensation to reduce vulnerability; in Environment and Climate Change; in Territorial Management, its Governance and Governability and in Disaster Management and Recovery.

It is evident that our region is progressing in the field of disaster prevention and that this represents a commitment so that through the efforts and will of the Central American governments and with support from regional institutions, we can implement joint actions and efforts in this field with international cooperation and technical assistance that have supported these regional processes and initiatives.

I would also like to express our recognition of the laborious process of constructing this policy which has been a significant achievement that has counted on the participation of many political and social actors in the region. Our deep appreciation for the support and cooperation of friendly countries, including Spain, Japan, Norway, Sweden, China (Taiwan), United States and Switzerland, as well as the European Union, various United Nations agencies and the World Bank.

Juan Daniel Alemán Gurdián  
Secretary General SICA

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## Introduction

The genesis of the Central American Policy on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management (PCGIR) has involved a series of regional efforts which were started in October, 1999, with the approval of the Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Vulnerability and Disasters in Central America, a qualitative leap from a reactive approach to a vision of sustainable development.

The Mitch+5 Forum, held in December 2003, envisaged the convergence of individuals from different sectors, government, civil society and international agencies to reflect upon progress achieved in relation to risk management, while at the same time allowing regional proposals to be made so that future development actions would contribute to reversing the disaster risk accumulation process.

In 2006, the Regional Disaster Reduction Plan -PRRD- for 2006-2015 was drafted as an instrument to guide local, municipal, territorial, national and regional planning to reduce socio-natural disasters, which would facilitate the creation and identification of appropriate policies, priorities and actions for reducing disaster risks in the context of sustainable development, and in such manner permit the application of the strategic and operational objectives of that instrument in the plans of national and regional institutions, as well as other entities, civil society actors and public and private investment programs of the countries in the region.

Pursuant to mandate number 17 of the XXIV Summit of Presidents in June 2009, CEPREDENAC coordinated the “Regional Mitch+10 Forum” through a process of broad and participatory consultation with the different national and regional sectors to produce the guidelines for the Central American Policy on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management -PCGIR-.

In this context, the PCGIR gained new life, being approved on June 30, 2010 in the XXXV Ordinary Meeting of SICA Heads of State and Government. Its objective is to provide the Central American region with a general framework for comprehensive disaster risk management which will facilitate links between policy decisions and the corresponding application mechanisms and instruments, interlinking risk management with economic management, the management of social cohesion and environmental management, based on a comprehensive approach. In this context, the countries in the Central American isthmus are currently making significant efforts, in some cases in developing and in others implementing their own national policy in accordance with the PCGIR.

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## I. What is the Central American Policy on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management -PCGIR-?

This policy responds to the need to update regional commitments aimed at reducing and preventing disaster risk, thereby contributing to a vision of comprehensive safe development in Central America.

A decade after the political and strategic commitments were made at the highest level, it is now necessary to incorporate lessons learned, adapt the commitments and agreements to binding national, regional and international policies, and provide guidance in the region in order to intensify the work done, taking advantage of comparative advantages and lessons learned, identifying gaps and asymmetries and promoting a renewed vision in which the criteria of sustainability, equity and participation will strengthen implementation tools and processes.

This policy contains guidelines, commitments and general and medium term actions to be realized through a structure of *policy - strategy - plan*. The policy establishes the scope to make it possible to delimit and ensure that risk management is adequately addressed as a theme which is integral in nature. The contents include central coordinating elements in which commitments adopted by regional authorities are determined. Processes are also identified and the means by which this policy will be implemented; this includes institutional and financial aspects as well as those related to supervision, accountability and participation. The more detailed aspects of these regional instruments, such as budget, impact and performance indicators, and short and medium term responsibilities, will be developed at the level of strategies and plans. In particular, the Regional Disaster Reduction Plan, which is still in force, will be adapted to be consistent with the policy and incorporate in detail its instruments and application mechanisms.

The contents include orientation and establish the specific institutional responsibilities of the Central American Integration System (SICA) at different levels. Therefore, the way to approach it at the national level is through the mechanisms and bodies that SICA institutions have defined in their regulatory instruments.

This policy offers considerable added value to the processes that are now being developed in the countries and the region, mainly through the harmonization and integration of sectorial and sub-systemic approaches with a more concrete territorial basis, an update of theoretical and conceptual approaches, the intensification of coordination and promotion actions and a series of decisions in sensitive areas not covered in previous strategies.

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## II. Context: ten years of constructing agreements and institutional foundations

Central America is among the most vulnerable regions to disasters worldwide. The trend of risks resulting in disasters has increased in the last decades, especially in recent years. Between 1998 and 2008, more storms affected the region, often twice the average of the previous 50 years.<sup>1</sup> In 2005, more than 6 million people were affected by the hurricane season in the region.

A concrete example of this reality occurred in Central America in October 1998 when Hurricane Mitch killed more than 9,000 people and directly affected more than 3 million.

Faced with this inescapable reality and after the impacts of Hurricane Mitch and other major disasters in recent years, the Central American countries have begun to recognize the economic, social and environmental causes of the risks that make them vulnerable to such disasters and their impacts. This has resulted in a series of policy decisions, the adoption of international and regional instruments and mechanisms, and the strengthening of national institutions responsible for promoting and coordinating risk reduction.

The XX Ordinary Meeting of the Presidents of Central America, Dominican Republic and Belize, known as the XX Summit, held in Guatemala in October 1999, marked the most important milestone in generating political and institutional guidelines to address the relationship between risk, disaster and development. The region's leaders at that time recognized the need for "a comprehensive and intersectorial, public and private commitment by Central America and the community in general" and adopted an ambitious systemic vision, approving the "**Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Vulnerability and Disasters in Central America**".

Under the Strategic Framework, risk management has been incorporated into many policy initiatives in addition to the management of regional water, the environment, agriculture, health, education, housing, public works, food security, and others. In this context, the **Regional Disaster Reduction Plan, (PRRD)** was designed as the central operating element of the Strategic Framework mentioned above.

At the national and local levels, governments and civil society, with the backing of SICA institutions and valuable support from international donors, have developed significant strategies, actions and investments, seeking to achieve the objective of reducing vulnerability and the impact of disasters.

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<sup>1</sup> These figures are taken from: "10 Years after Hurricane Mitch: Outlook for disaster risk management in Central America", Risk, Emergency and Disaster Task Force Inter-Agency Workgroup for Latin America and the Caribbean (REDLAC), 2008

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In the last decade, all the states in the region have updated their legal frameworks for risk management and the budgets allocated to the structures have increased significantly. With increasing investment and additional support from the international community, national coordination structures have been strengthened and territorial risk management networks have increased at the municipal and community levels. Similarly, new instruments and mechanisms for emergency preparedness and response have been developed and post disaster recovery with a risk management approach has been strengthened.

As part of this evolution and learning process, in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, in December 2003, **Mitch +5** was held with the broad participation of multiple sectors for the purpose of evaluating progress and challenges in the region; it concluded by urging the countries to update, formulate and adopt state policies and strategic plans from 2004 onward.

Following this process, in June 2009, the authorities of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic, adopted mandate 17, which states:

"Instruct SG-SICA to expedite the implementation of the Regional Disaster Reduction Plan through the Coordination Center for Natural Disaster Prevention -CEPRENAC- and conduct the **Mitch +10 Forum** through a broad process of consultation with national and regional sectors to build the "guidelines for the Central American Policy on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management."

Following this mandate, a long, participatory consultation process was conducted, culminating with the **"Regional Mitch +10 Forum, Toward a Central American Policy on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management: a regional challenge ten years after Mitch"** in Guatemala City from 21 to 23 July 2009, inaugurated by the President of Guatemala. The Forum was attended by over 400 representatives of national, regional and international organizations as well as civil organizations working in development and disaster risk reduction, providing extensive opportunities for consultation. As a result of this consultation process and the event, guidelines were developed for the policy and set forth in the Declaration of the Forum.

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### III. Why do we need a policy on comprehensive disaster risk Management?

The countries in the region and SICA institutions have been making investments and adopting policies, strategies, plans and agreements in pursuit of safe sustainable development. Risk management has gained in importance over traditional methods of disaster relief and is now considered a crosscutting and integral element for sustainable development and human safety in our societies.

However, the growing impact of disasters shows that risk reduction and prevention processes need to be intensified and coordinated, commitments should be strengthened and investments increased. Institutional arrangements and planning, guided by international and regional agreements, also need to be strengthened and updated in order to incorporate and consolidate an integral view of risk management and its inseparable relationship with development.

The scale of the major hydro-meteorological and geological hazards faced by the region exceeds the scope of national and local government, so it is also necessary to scale up coordination and joint promotion at the regional level.

Even with the significant developments in this field in recent years, there has been a sectorial view of risk and its management, considering these issues as the responsibility of a group of specialized agencies. To overcome this view and give risk management its true integral dimension is one of the major challenges facing the Central American region.

Government organization and resources continue to be highly centralized and limited. Greater concentration of efforts is required to strengthen governance mechanisms, decentralization and the promotion of autonomy and resilience in the communities.

Central America is known for having generated and accumulated a number of successful experiences in different areas of risk management. However, these actions are mostly linked to processes supported by international cooperation and civil society organizations and in many cases are not transferred sustainably to government policies, structures and budgets.

Recognizing these realities from the perspective of building efficient and harmonized regulatory frameworks requires the updating and articulation of policy instruments, strategy and planning, so that lessons learned can be translated into guidelines for public administration.

In response to these challenges, the Central American Policy on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management, PCGIR, guides the development of inter-institutional coordination and promotion processes that contribute to intensifying and increasing the quality and impact of national comprehensive risk management strategies.

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The policy will also establish guidelines and commitments based on a comprehensive (multi-sectorial and territorial) approach in order to link risk management to economic management, social management, social cohesion and environmental management. This approach requires a clearer identification of institutional and sectorial responsibilities and the development of systemic actions and investments in the economic, social and environmental fields which embody the crosscutting nature of risk management.

At the same time, it will be a guiding framework to strengthen links in this field with international commitments arising from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Hyogo Framework for Action.

As part of these processes, the PCGIR is the highest level regional guide in the field of Disaster Risk Management and under which specific strategies will be designed as well as updates to the Regional Disaster Reduction Plan, PRRD.

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## IV. Principles, Objectives and Scope

### A. Principles

Actions undertaken in the framework of this policy shall be subject to regional regulations established in the Tegucigalpa Protocol to the ODECA Charter, the Articles of Agreement of CEPREDENAC, and national and multilateral regulations relating to its implementation. The principles set out as universal standards of conduct / performance are complemented by those regulations to guide all actions related to Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management.

#### 1. General characteristics

**Gender equity:** this advocates for the creation of equal opportunities for women and men, with balanced participation and treatment (Opportunities / Participation / Benefits). In order to reduce gender gaps, progress is needed initially to make visible the different form in which women and men are affected by disasters and also the different roles assigned to them in risk management and development processes.

**Gradual:** a sequential process with effective and efficient timing and scope of implementation of the instruments that ensure achievement of policy objectives. Each country will implement the policy at its own pace, progressively, in coordination and in accordance with national law.

**Transparency and Participation:** an instrument for monitoring, evaluation and information will be available to all stakeholders, through various means, including regular reports to the Council of Representatives of CEPREDENAC, the councils of the Environmental Subsystem, the Consultative Committee of SICA, other relevant regional forums depending on the matter and regional and international technical and financial cooperation bodies. As in the formulation process, in policy execution there will be opportunities for participation and consultation with the public and private sectors and civil society organizations at the regional level.

**Complementary:** the policy will contribute to exploiting synergies and complementary aspects among SICA countries and selected strategic areas, as well as between public sector actors, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders in risk management, including international cooperation agencies.

**Allocation of responsibilities:** disaster risk prevention and reduction is the responsibility of all public or private actors depending on the scope of their powers as set forth in their legal framework.

## 2. Specific characteristics

**Regional:** it guides actions that can be implemented throughout Central America and are conducive to the generation of significant scale economies, encouraging the integration of actions, taking better advantage of international cooperation and promoting horizontal cooperation within the region.

**Territorial:** the human capacity for relating to territory through which processes of habitat intervention, organization and transformation are established. It should be noted that the concept of territoriality must be implicit in the planning processes of sustainable and safe development, so achievement of this objective requires the adaptation of economic and social activities to the most favorable opportunities based on balance and the optimization of sustainable natural resource use.

**Integral Territorial Safety:** this is the dynamic and multidimensional nature of safety and the corresponding responsibility for evaluating the impact each human decision might have on the territory as a whole, seen as a single development unit. It involves commitment to territorial safety that benefits human communities and ecosystems so that the dynamics of the former do not become a threat or produce risk for the latter.

**The right to prevention:** vulnerable people and communities and the ecosystems with which they interact are entitled to development processes, plans and programs that consider their current conditions of risk and avoid the creation of new threats and vulnerabilities through comprehensive risk management.

### B. General objective

To provide Central America with a guiding framework on comprehensive disaster risk management which facilitates the link between policy decisions and corresponding implementation mechanisms and instruments, linking risk management with economic management, management of social cohesion and environmental management based on a holistic approach (multi sectorial and territorial), respect for and the guarantee of human rights, and taking multiculturalism and gender equity into consideration.

### C. Specific objectives

To promote the implementation of Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management in the countries of the region; and, in the functional and institutional structure of the

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Central American Integration System, as a crosscutting and integral component of human development processes.

To promote the design of development processes in Central America under conditions of safety, adopting risk management and territorial approaches as a single development unit.

To work towards the harmonization of policies and strategies for comprehensive disaster risk management in the region, with others adopted in the economic, social and environmental subsystems of SICA.

## D. Scope

### 1. Management

The Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management approach is based on the social, economic, environmental and political-institutional dimensions of development and on their harmonization, which is expressed territorially, seeking the creation of integrated territorial safety conditions that overcome existing shortcomings and future causes of risk.

Traditionally, the focus of prevention and risk reduction policies and strategies has been defined using the concept of intensive risk. This concept refers to events of great intensity with high mortality, but low frequency rates. Intensive risk is concentrated in a few places where exposure to hazards and vulnerability are combined. In Central America, intensive risk is primarily a characteristic of large cities, densely populated zones and strategic areas. Very powerful and / or extensive threats include earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, tsunamis and severe droughts.

However, in its thematic scope relating to extensive risk management, the PCGIR includes daily low intensity, high frequency events, such as windstorms, floods and landslides. These represent a very high proportion of total disaster events and are growing rapidly. In Central America, extensive risk is primarily a feature of rural settlements (dispersed) and their livelihoods, and unstable urban settlements in high risk areas, highly vulnerable to hazards linked to hydro-meteorological phenomena.

To harmonize or adapt the PCGIR to the Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management approach it is necessary to address the problem based on the anticipation of future risks and the reduction of existing ones. In this context, a distinction is made between prospective management and corrective management. Each of these management areas has very different implications.

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Prospective management is performed according to risks that can be created through new investment and development initiatives, both for the investment itself as well as for a specific society and its ecosystems. In this context, prospective management is an integral component of urban and rural development management, investment project management and environmental management.

Corrective management action corresponds to intervention in risk conditions which exist as a result of previous and current development processes and is usually manifested through infrastructure and protection works. This policy aims to achieve corrective management to transform the prevailing social, environmental, production and settlement conditions and focus on vulnerability as well as socio-natural and anthropogenic threats.

## 2. Territory

Disasters as manifestations of risk, based on their impacts, have a defined territorial boundary which is considered to be the "territory of impact." However, causal risk and disaster factors -both for physical events as well as different components of vulnerability- do not necessarily have the same territorial boundaries. Very often, the "territory of causality" tends to differ substantially from the "territory of impact ", even when other specific factors may coincide. This differentiation between territories of impact and causality is especially important when it comes to administrative units or even different national territories. Such is the case of shared watersheds.

Based on these considerations, the implementation of actions arising from this policy at national and local levels corresponds to the Nation States, in accordance with their political, strategic and institutional systems.

To identify territorial groups to facilitate the implementation of this policy, promoting comprehensive approaches that can share concrete experiences and use common tools, the following categories are proposed:

- a. Homogeneous areas: extensive areas or macro-zones that are distinguished by their geographical homogeneity based on physical, economic or sociocultural characteristics with similar disaster risk profiles, such as (a) dry arch or drought corridor, (b) the Caribbean coastal region, (c) shared regional watersheds, (d) transboundary areas.
- b. Equivalent areas: smaller areas with socioeconomic, cultural or physical similarities, but no spatial continuity. These include (a) large cities, (b) medium and small cities (c) highly vulnerable rural communities (d) Central American volcanic chain.
- c. Strategic Areas: according to regional criteria of investment, competitiveness, prioritization based on asymmetry, natural heritage under threat and / or exposure to disasters

CEPREDENAC, the Environmental Subsystem and the Specialized Secretariats and Agencies of SICA will focus regional actions through these territorial categories, in addition to actions at the national and local levels.

Comprehensive disaster risk management should be considered an intrinsic part of the planning and public investment processes. Following the principle of areas of responsibility, each public entity should reduce the risk of its own social or productive activity and avoid creating new risks.

The Councils of Ministers and Specialized Institutions of SICA within the economic, social and environmental subsystems will incorporate comprehensive risk management into their regional planning structures so that international and regional policy frameworks can be applied at the national and local levels to develop a culture of safety and resilience.

## V. Core elements and measures

### A. Disaster risk reduction in investment for Sustainable Economic Development

#### 1. Planning of public investment with risk management criteria

Value-added economic activities and productivity in the region should be planned and carried out considering levels of exposure to disaster risks and establishing mechanisms to reduce or control it as well as avoiding the creation of new risks.

SIECA, with the support of CEPREDENAC, will develop guidance for safe public investment in productive infrastructure, particularly to improve accessibility and reduce the vulnerability of ground transport in the region.

#### 2. Financial protection of investment

The Economic Subsystem of SICA, through its Council of Ministers, will implement financial protection investments through insurance mechanisms, promoting the creation of products and subsidiary and supportive protection mechanisms which will make it possible to cover "uninsurable" social groups.

Fully consistent with the Central American Agricultural Policy for 2008 - 2017, CAC and CEPREDENAC will coordinate actions for implementing the element of Funding and Risk Management, particularly in activities related to natural and socio-natural threats in the Risk Management component.

This Policy will ensure the necessary synergy with the Central American Strategy for Territorial Rural Development, ECADERT, in relation to risk management.

### **3. Systematization and generation of information**

CEPREDENAC and SIECA, in support of the Councils of Ministers of Planning, Treasury and Finance, will design the systematization of information and criteria related to quantification and assessment of damage caused by disasters, ensuring their availability for decision-making when formulating or evaluating investment projects. This systematization and the quantification and assessment criteria will be developed in a disaggregated way so that gender and multicultural differences are appropriately visible.

CEPREDENAC will implement the use of information platforms that facilitate understanding of risk and forecast data on the magnitude and likelihood of the occurrence of natural hazards.

### **4. Evaluation of investment**

The Councils of Ministers of Treasury and Finance, with the support of SIECA, will adopt standardized economic evaluation methodologies for the inclusion of risk management in public investment, accompanied by a systematic training process for technicians who are directly related to project formulation and evaluation in their countries and in the region.

### **5. Promotion of public investment in risk management**

The Councils of Ministers of Treasury and Finance, with the support of SIECA and SG-SICA, will establish funding mechanisms that will make it possible to guarantee the sustainability of actions that are undertaken with the support of international donors, adapting them to the technical and budgetary realities and commitments of the countries.

## **B. Development and social compensation to reduce vulnerability**

### **1. Incorporation of risk management into formal and non formal education**

Understanding risk in educational processes and the promotion of a culture of prevention will be priorities that should be consolidated in formal education at the levels of junior high school, high school and higher education as well as in existing non formal education. This task will be undertaken by the Council of Ministers of Education and Culture, with support from CECC, SISCA, CEPREDENAC and CSUCA.

This understanding will include specific criteria on the different way men and women relate to risk and their different capacities to cope with it. The processes will also consider the need to present content and proposals, taking into account the ancestral knowledge of native peoples and the multicultural characteristics of the countries.

The Council of Ministers of Education and Culture, with support from CECC and SISCA, will determine sustainability actions for these processes, identifying their own

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mechanisms for incorporating them into the educational structures, both at the administrative and teaching levels, in addition to the different research, teaching and social outreach fields.

## **2. Housing and territorial management with a risk management approach**

The Council of Ministers of Housing and Human Settlements (CCVAH), with the support of SISCA and CEPREDENAC, will promote a comprehensive disaster risk management approach in their policies and strategies for human settlements and territorial management and development.

As part of the Central American Strategy on Housing and Human Settlements for 2009-2012, CEPREDENAC will support SISCA and CCVAH in advancing the Risk Management Guidelines, particularly in the establishment of coordination mechanisms for information management and the generation of input for guidelines on the safe construction of houses and for promoting a regional program for dealing with homes that have been affected by disasters and are at risk.

## **3. Investment in basic social infrastructure with risk management criteria**

As part of the Central American Water Agenda, the CCAD, the General Secretariat of SICA and the Interagency Group on Water will incorporate in the priorities of the ECAGIRH and the PACAGIRH those priorities which focus on risk management and climate change, particularly aspects related to risk reduction in the design and operation of water related services and infrastructure.

SISCA, COMISCA and CECC, with technical support from CEPREDENAC, will promote in the countries the adoption and financing of specific investment measures for strengthening and protecting basic social service infrastructure, depending on the potential of exposure to threats.

## **C. Environment and Climate Change**

### **1. Harmonization of the policies and strategies framework for Risk - Water - Environment**

Under the Environmental Subsystem of SICA, CEPREDENAC, CCAD and CRRH will coordinate implementation and coordination of common policy and strategy instruments, specifically the Regional Climate Change Strategy; the Central American Environmental Plan -PARCA-; the Regional Water Agenda, which includes the Water Convention, the Strategy -ECAGIRH- and Plan -PACAGIRH-; the Regional Disaster Reduction Plan -PRRD-.

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The Council of Ministers of CCAD, in coordination with the Council of Representatives of CEPREDENAC, will determine the measures to align national policies, strategies and risk management and environmental management plans in their common components and instruments, mainly related to climate change adaptation, natural heritage management, particularly forest fire prevention, and comprehensive water resource management.

## **2. Incorporation of the risk management approach in Climate Change**

As part of the Regional Agro-Environmental and Health Strategy -ERA- for 2009-2024, CEPREDENAC will coordinate and support SIECA and CAC, SISCA and COMISCA, and CCAD in promoting the Action Line "Capacity building on climate change adaptation, taking into consideration the vulnerabilities of the territories", particularly incorporating the concept of sustainable development and disaster risk reduction contained in the PRRD plans, programs and projects arising from the ERAS.

### **D. Territorial Management, Governance and Governability**

#### **1. Local capacity building**

Local capacity building for risk reduction and disaster response should be scaled up so as to consolidate the autonomy and resilience of communities and territories. CEPREDENAC, ICAP, FEMICA and national municipal associations will coordinate and promote systemic integration with the local development of territorial management, environmental management, urban management and risk management.

#### **2. Urban risk management**

Considering the concentration of risks in large and medium cities in the region and, therefore, the high exposure of the population, infrastructure and productive assets, FEMICA, CEPREDENAC, CCVAH and national municipal associations will promote empowerment, institutional development and the planning capacity of local authorities in capital cities and medium sized cities for risk management, promoting the exchange of experiences between cities as a strategy for revitalizing efforts.

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## **E. Disaster Management and Recovery**

### **1. Consolidation of the Regional Mutual Assistance and Coordination Mechanism in Disaster Situations**

The Central American Regional Mechanisms for Mutual Assistance in case of disasters is the instrument that the Central American countries will use to swiftly, expeditiously and opportunely deal with an emergency or disaster situation that occurs in one or more countries and that requires humanitarian assistance from the other countries. They will act in coordination and harmonization with the Humanitarian Reform process that guides global humanitarian assistance and recovery processes. In order to operate, this mechanism will use: (1) The Regional Foreign Ministry Handbook on Disaster Procedures, and (2) The Regional Disaster Reduction Plan.

To facilitate operation the Central American countries will make every effort necessary to improve and become more agile in processes of managing customs and migratory issues in emergency situations in the region, especially when a neighboring country is providing humanitarian assistance.

### **2. Efforts to standardize information management and damage evaluation**

It is extremely important to improve information management and communication channels between the different countries, so the National Systems, with the support of CEPREDENAC, will seek to establish compatible monitoring and early warning systems.

The National Systems, with support from CEPREDENAC, will establish a geographic information system that will make it possible to link regional threat and vulnerability information with other information vital for economic, social and environmental development, on a scale that will facilitate risk analysis at the community level. The tools available in the region and countries should be used for this.

The National Systems, with support from CEPREDENAC, will standardize the damage assesment and Needs Analysis -EDAN- instruments and coordination mechanisms for timely dissemination.

### **3. Recovery and Reconstruction with Transformation**

For the orientation of post-disaster actions, the Central American Integration System will adopt the paradigm of Recovery and Reconstruction with Transformation, to be understood as the process of restoring acceptable and sustainable living conditions through the rehabilitation, reparation or reconstruction of infrastructure, goods and services that have been destroyed, disrupted or damaged in the area affected, and

the reactivation or promotion of the economic and social development of communities affected, avoiding the increase and reconstruction of existing vulnerabilities and inequities, thus representing an opportunity for transformation during the reparation process.

As part of this process, Early Recovery is adopted as a multidimensional process that connects the humanitarian action phase to the reconstruction phase under the viewpoint of development, restoring people's capacities, livelihoods, institutions and territories to plan and act in Recovery and Reconstruction with Transformation.

#### **4. Exchange of experiences intra and extra regionally**

National and local disaster management capacity should be encouraged, using mechanisms of exchange and mutual learning at the regional level and with other regions and countries of the Americas. CEPREDENAC will establish a systematic exchange program.

## **VI. Processes, instruments and implementation mechanisms**

This policy identifies the main processes, instruments and mechanisms required for implementation:

### **A. Coordination and institutional, organizational and functional strengthening**

The General Secretariat of SICA and the Executive Secretariat of CEPREDENAC will make the most appropriate institutional arrangements to promote implementation of the PCGIR as a high-level policy platform in the region. This will report to the pro tempore President of SICA and seek consultation and coordination with the coordinating secretariats of the subsystems of SICA and the secretariats of the system's specialized agencies. This involves the consolidation of regional coordination mechanisms between secretariats as part of the modernization process of SICA.

It is essential to continue supporting the modernization of legal and institutional frameworks which make the policy viable at the national level, considering safety criteria, risk management, disaster management, safe recovery with transformation and reconstruction, as well as the need for an approach consistent with environmental management and comprehensive water resource management.

CEPREDENAC will fully implement its internal mechanisms of participation and organization. In particular, it will promote the establishment and operation of National Commissions of CEPREDENAC in each country, as specific national bodies which will facilitate and make it possible to apply the policy.

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## **B. Participation, civil society and the private sector**

The participation of all sectors of society, including civil society organizations and the private sector, is crucial for achieving successful a comprehensive management. Public mechanisms and instruments will be established to ensure access to information, decision-making processes, control and public auditing.

The Consultative Committee of SICA, CEPREDENAC and national authorities responsible for risk management, will guarantee the participation of representatives of civil society organizations with risk management capacities in the national and regional systems.

## **C. Laws and regulations**

The competent national authorities, with support from the Executive Secretariat of CEPREDENAC, will develop and strengthen legal instruments that will allow for the urgent institutionalization, internalization and appropriation of processes, experiences and products developed through cooperation projects.

## **D. Accountability**

The creation of risk and lack of attention to vulnerability involves responsibilities that must be fully accepted. State and regional control bodies will strengthen the control and accountability systems required to consolidate these responsibilities and initiate actions accordingly.

## **E. Research and Knowledge Management**

CEPREDENAC, CSUCA, CRRH and CCAD will coordinate the development of mechanisms for exchanging and integrating technical and scientific information at the regional level, for which it is essential to develop support regulations and protocols. The basis of this will be installed capacity in the institutions that generate such information, especially government agencies, universities and research institutes and centers.

Under the coordination of CEPREDENAC, activities will be organized to recover and disseminate instruments, strategies and best practices in risk management, which have been implemented primarily at the local level, as well as promoting convergence mechanisms between scientific knowledge and ancestral knowledge of traditional peoples.

## F. Funding of the PCGIR

To support the implementation of this Policy, the General Secretariat of SICA, CEPREDENAC and BCIE will take the steps necessary to establish or expand financial mechanisms, such as setting up a Central American Fund for the Promotion of Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management to provide resources and technical assistance to the countries of the region in this area. In the same spirit, a portfolio of strategic projects will be prepared that can be funded with resources from the countries in the region and with support from international cooperation.

These institutions will seek to strengthen financial assistance mechanisms to countries affected by disasters.

## VII. Organizational framework for policy execution

### a. Structure

The **General Secretariat of SICA**, through the **Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America -CEPREDENAC-** is responsible for ensuring the implementation of policy mechanisms and for facilitating promotion and coordination with other entities in the system and between secretariats and subsystems.

A monitoring body will be set up composed of: the Secretary General of SICA, the Secretaries of the economic **SIECA**, social **SISCA** and environmental **CCAD** subsystems, and the Executive Secretary of CEPREDENAC. SE-CEPREDENAC will be responsible for processes of notification and will perform as the secretariat of this body. The entity will also monitor processes and mechanisms of policy implementation inside the subsystems as well as ensuring the integral and multi sectorial nature of the policy

The **Regional Consultative Forum** of the Central American Policy on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management will be established. This forum will consist of regional and national, public, private and civil society organizations. SG-SICA and CEPREDENAC, in conjunction with CC-SICA, will establish guidelines for the setting up this forum in the immediate future.

### b. Strategic and planning framework

Under the guidance of this Policy, the various subsystems and SICA Secretariats will incorporate the Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management approach into their corresponding **Strategies**.

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The **Regional Disaster Reduction Plan -PRRD-**, effective through 2015, will incorporate medium term actions at all levels of implementation: regional, national, sectorial. It will be updated in 2010 to serve the purposes of this policy.

The **Multi-Annual Plan of SICA** will have a cross-cutting approach to comprehensive risk management in the planning of all subsystems and, specifically, in the Environmental Subsystem to include aspects which are directly related to it.

The **Multi-Annual Plan of CEPREDENAC** will establish specific actions for which this body will be responsible under the PCGIR over a period of 5 years.

### **c. Control and monitoring**

SG-SICA, with support from CEPREDENAC, will establish a monitoring and control system for policy implementation and progress, consistent with the national monitoring systems and with regional mechanisms established in SICA, and having the responsibility of informing the current pro tempore President of SICA about results semiannually.



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in Central America -CEPREDENAC-**

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