

Rapporteur's Report on SELA-ACS Seminar “DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION”



Social Development


Permanent Secretariat of SELA
SELA-ACS Seminar “DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION”

Antigua, Republic of Guatemala

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I. BACKGROUND AND GENERAL INFORMATION

As a follow-up to the agreements reached during the Forum "Responding to the challenges of integration for the development of Latin America and the Caribbean. Proposals from the regional and subregional integration mechanisms," convened by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in December 2022, the Seminar "DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION" was held on 9 May this year, both virtually and in person.

The General Secretariat of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) organized the event, which was held in person at the Hotel Museo Casa Santo Domingo, in Antigua, Guatemala. The purpose of the event was to share best practices in the area of disaster risk reduction and climate change, in addition to identifying points of convergence and building proposals for joint work in this area.

The Secretaries and representatives of the following regional integration organisations participated in the Seminar: Association of Caribbean States (ACS), Andean Community (CAN), Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), the Latin American Energy Organisation (OLADE), Central American Integration System (SICA), Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America - Peoples' Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP), Pro Tempore Presidency of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), in addition to honourable representatives of international organisations and bodies specialised in disaster risk reduction and climate change.

The Seminar was opened by the Secretaries of the ACS and SELA. The Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), Rodolfo Sabonge, after welcoming the participants, called for collective regional action to address the climate crisis, which is accompanied by significant threats to the economy, infrastructure and living standards of the population.

He stressed that the meeting was taking place within the framework of the agreements reached by the different Secretariats at the CELAC meeting in Argentina, where it was decided to work in coordination on the different priority issues. In this connection, he expressed his gratitude for the presence of the various Secretaries and specialized organisations and acknowledged SELA's leadership in carrying out the initiative.

Afterwards, the Permanent Secretary of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), Ambassador Clarems Endara, welcomed the participants and underscored the importance of continuing

the debates on the prioritised issues, with the objective of responding to the challenges of integration in Latin America and the Caribbean. This work is beginning to bear fruit, following two technical meetings already held in San Salvador, under the auspices of SICA and its Secretary General.

Then, the Secretary General of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), Sergio Abreu, stressed the need to work not only cooperatively, but also in a coordinated manner, so that complementary activities can be found. He pointed out that, on the issue of disasters related to natural and socio-natural hazards, and everything related to climate change, there is a clear need to coordinate and work together throughout the region. This means that each body must contribute what it can do, according to its own competences.

He stated that ALADI's objective was to identify points of common interest among all the integration schemes of Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to cooperate in the exchange of best practices in the field of climate change and disaster risk reduction. All this on the basis of the three pillars of economic, social and environmental sustainability. Above all, the aim is to have a common policy of information and adequate and rapid responses to the damages that occur, mainly in the areas of trade and the agri-food sector.

Afterwards, Ambassador Ana Isabel Carrillo Fabián, Director General for Multilateral and Economic International Relations of the Republic of Guatemala, took the floor. In addition to welcoming and expressing the greetings of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guatemala, Ambassador Carrillo noted that Guatemala, in its capacity as Chair of the Council of Ministers of the Association of Caribbean States, sought to work on the issue of climate change as a fundamental pillar in its work programme, given that the region is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. She also informed that the increase of multidimensional cooperation, as well as the green and blue agenda, are other issues that need to be strengthened within its work programme.

She recognised that climate migration is a phenomenon that is already occurring, and that estimates suggest that by 2050 between 25 and 200 million people could be displaced due to the effects of climate change (including droughts, floods, rising sea levels). She said that Guatemala recognises the importance of addressing the structural causes that drive migration, for which the creation of spaces to foster strategic alliances, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, is considered fundamental. In line with objective two of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the formulation of strategies for adaptation and resilience to climate change are fundamental for the well-being of people. Ambassador Carrillo made it clear that it is time to implement concrete actions, that it is necessary to address climate migration from a comprehensive and multidisciplinary perspective. This includes strengthening early warning systems, reducing the risk of disasters caused by natural hazards, promoting climate adaptation and resilience in affected communities, improving social protection systems and promoting safe, orderly and regular migration as a way of adapting to climate change.

She stressed that climate migration is a challenge that requires a global response. It is therefore essential

to take coordinated and effective action at national, regional, and international levels to address this urgent situation; but above all to protect the rights and dignity of people who are affected by the effects of climate change. She stressed the importance of redoubling efforts and investments to reduce the vulnerability of populations, to improve adaptation and migration strategies, to build resilience of affected communities, who require opportunities and livelihoods to ensure their well-being and that of their families, through continued collaboration and exchange of best practices.

All participants agreed that this seminar provided continuity and fulfilled the challenge and commitments acquired in December last year, within the framework of the CELAC summit. At that time, the challenge was taken on to advance along the path of integration based on the proposals of the regional and subregional integration organisations, in order to build mechanisms that provide convergent lines of work with a regional approach. All of this, obviously respecting the mandate of each organisation.

The activity was moderated by the Director for Disaster Risk of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, Ana Leticia Ramírez, and was divided into four sessions. The first session included keynote speeches by CEPREDENAC and RED - SELA. This was followed by a presentation of the Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative, by the Global Centre for Climate Mobility. The third session of the event included presentations on the topic: "Perspectives addressing climate risks and human mobility in the Greater Caribbean: Existing efforts and prospects for cooperation for the positive adaptation of people in the region," by Mr. Pablo Escibano, Regional Thematic Specialist on Migration, Environment and Climate Change at the International Organization for Migration (IOM); and Liliana Gamboa, Project Manager at the Open Society Foundations (OSF). Finally, the Secretaries of the regional integration mechanisms took the floor to present in plenary the issues of common interest for the creation of a convergent work agenda.

II. SUMMARY OF INTERVENTIONS

FIRST SESSION

Virginia Jiménez referred to the work carried out jointly by the RED and the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA). She informed that this is a base diagnosis for the definition of a strategic framework that will guide SELA's work in disaster risk management. The work was carried out jointly with the Network of Social Studies for Disaster Prevention in Latin America and the Caribbean, an organization that has been working in the region for over 30 years.

She reported that disasters will continue to be a problem in the medium term, expected to spread to key areas in the development agenda of countries. She made it clear that the main actions have to address poverty, urban governance and the decline of ecosystems, which are the underlying drivers of disaster risk. Drivers that are common to all, to all grants, to all countries. The study included three activities: an analysis of the current context of systemic disaster risk in the region, supported by regional reports; a synthesis of the functioning of strategic frameworks for disaster risk management in Latin America; and, in this regard, eight regional frameworks were analysed, eight interviews with key stakeholders who had participated in the design, implementation and monitoring of some of these initiatives and developed an information gathering instrument, which was applied to SELA focal points.

The study stressed the need to undertake training activities, as it is necessary to rely on common elements to be able to understand each other in this vast region. Technical and operational recommendations were prepared for SELA's approach to the components of disaster risk management in the region. Everything under the umbrella of a Regional Action Plan for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

She reported that they all seek to promote knowledge of disaster risk for better management at national, regional, and local levels, in the different territorial and sectoral management units of the countries. These issues are present in most of the guiding frameworks in each group of countries, through policies and strategies. The programmes that they propose as a common point encourage and facilitate spaces for participation for the exchange of experiences and the creation of networks.

Following the diagnosis carried out, some challenges were presented on how to address the issue:

1) Deal with asymmetries, recognising the differences among countries in terms of geographic extension, capacities, resources; 2) Move towards prospective approaches to disaster risk management (currently the focus is on response); 3) Strive to translate discourse into reality, addressing the prospective issue of avoiding the construction of disaster risk; and 4) Address the lack of standardised platforms for data collection and other types of information.

Ms. Jiménez pointed out that countries have databases, but they are not shared. Therefore, it is not possible to measure risk in the region, and if we do not measure risk, we do not know what we are facing. There is a need for an information collection point, with the indicators of the Sendai Framework, but with more specific information. Instruments are needed to standardise the region in terms of information and analysis of the impact that disasters are having on the region. Therefore, increasing political commitment is a challenge of this time. It is necessary to improve political and technical support to the countries. We are just talking about systemic risk, about the complexity of systemic risk. Monitoring and accountability processes need to be reconsidered. Different programmes and projects are being implemented, but there is little information on rigorous monitoring of what is being done. As instruments are formulated, indicators and mechanisms for accountability must be established to monitor how progress is being made over time, and whether or not the established goals have been met.

The report also suggests rethinking the monitoring process, opening space for new actors and sectors beyond civil protection. It is important to involve stakeholders that have to do with issues such as development planning and finance, as well as other authorities that do not necessarily have to do with civil protection.

Finally, they identified some opportunities at the multilateral level, which can be summarised basically in the generation of information on disaster risk; the consideration of disaster risk in the design of social policy; the strengthening of training activities. These elements are related to financial transfer and planning for business continuity and post-disaster recovery. All focused on the preparation of the Regional Action Plan.

Claudia Griselda Herrera Melgar, Executive Secretary of the Coordination Centre for Disaster Prevention in Central America and the Dominican Republic (CEPREDENAC), began by underlining that, in Central America, integrated risk management and disaster risk reduction are a priority issue. Together with the impact of climate change, this issue requires full attention, as it is a latent reality. In addition, the issue of migration, as well as the underlying risk factors, are pressing issues in the region.

Given the multi-threat characteristic of the region in terms of the impact of different climate disasters, she highlighted 958 disasters associated with climate change with an economic impact of 2,183 trillion dollars in economic losses, alarming figures in terms of economic impact, which represents 8 years of GDP decline. For this reason, the intersectoral and strategic approach must be prioritised within public policies. The Executive Secretary of CEPREDENAC referred to the United Nations report that places four countries in the region among the ten most affected in terms of their GDP. However, important progress

has been made within the framework of the Central American integration system; there is a Central American Policy on Integrated Risk Management within the Sendai Framework, which incorporates priorities and goals, guaranteeing a national approach. It is the reference and strategic framework for all the processes promoted in the region.

She also reported that there is a strategic axis to address integrated risk management and its relationship with climate change. A strategic agenda for the environmental subsystem was drawn up, prioritising the construction of regional harmonisation. Policies and strategies are being harmonised to address integrated risk management and adaptation to climate change. Prioritisation is being sought for the shielding of public and private investment; the establishment of regional platforms; and, above all, the promotion of productive agricultural practices that can support sustainable rural development.

She indicated that, under a climate risk management approach, work is being done to produce, analyse and disseminate information, both for decision-making and for strengthening the early warning system, within the framework of the construction of a resilient Central America. A diagnosis was developed where specific objectives, lines of action and strengthening actions were defined to ensure coherence in the articulation of efforts, identifying challenges and strengths. In terms of protection, preparedness and response of early warning systems, mechanisms to further develop joint investment were considered. Turning words into action, she reported on the Third Regional Drill, which will take place from 12 to 16 June in Panama. It will incorporate the lessons learned from the two previous drills, as well as from Turkey's experience in responding to the earthquake. It will be a multi-hazard exercise (earthquake, tropical storm, biological threat, population displacement, cyber-attack). The General Secretary took the opportunity to extend an invitation to all participants to join this initiative.

SECOND SESSION

The second session of the agenda, related to the Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative, included a presentation by Ambassador Miguel Versvolovsky, advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean at the Global Centre for Climate Mobility. The Ambassador presented the scope and objectives of his institution's initiative. It is a joint effort that is being made around one of the phenomena that has the greatest impact on the region: migration in the context of climate change. This is the Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative, which was launched last year in September during the High-level Week of the United Nations General Assembly, whose vision is the creation of a common ground, a shared narrative and an agenda for action built on the realities and prospects of human displacement generated by climate change.

He noted that most of the climate action undertaken globally is focused on the ecological transition, on industry and a little less on people and communities. The Global Centre for Climate Mobility, an UN-supported partnership, aims to address the phenomenon of migration caused by the climate crisis in the most vulnerable regions of the world, always putting affected people and communities first. Elaborating on his Work Programme, he gave the floor to Sara Rousengerner, Senior Advisor and Director of Knowledge and Practice at the Global Centre for Climate Mobility.

THIRD SESSION

The third session, which included presentations on "Addressing Climate Risks and Human Mobility in the Greater Caribbean: Existing efforts and prospects for cooperation for the positive adaptation of people in the region," began with the intervention of the regional thematic specialist on migration, environment, and climate change of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Pablo Escribano. The specialist spoke about the impacts of climate change on mobility and some of the best practices that exist in the countries of the Greater Caribbean region.

He began by noting that the impact of climate change on population mobility is highly diverse and almost contradictory. The diversity of the region makes the threats and impacts of climate change diverse: threats such as hurricanes, extreme rainfall, floods; more gradual threats such as droughts, rising sea levels with different impacts depending on the timing of the risks; situations of exposure to climate change of agricultural livelihoods, or tourism, or subsistence agriculture; the situation of land use and urban planning that affect the way communities suffer the impacts of climate change. There are also individual constraints, such as gender: women, girls, men, boys, and diverse populations do not experience climate change impacts in the same way. There are also conditioning factors such as the situation of indigenous populations, age, socio-economic categories, income, among others. This means that the forms of mobility linked to climate change are very diverse. Disaster-related displacement or voluntary mobility are both possible. But there are also populations that cannot move, even though they are affected by disasters, because they do not have the resources, because they have nowhere to go.

Mention was made of the Global Compact for Migration, but also of all the work within the framework convention, within the Sendai Framework. Consequently, for the situation of displacement due to disasters, there has been a pioneering and innovative approach, and the simulations that include the processes of displacement, forced mobility, shelters, evacuations, are very positive. In this regard, some countries have already worked on evacuation processes. It is a very useful risk management mechanism.

What about populations crossing borders in disaster contexts? What access to rights do they have? What legislative frameworks do they have? Some countries have also provided policy solutions for free movement systems and processes. In areas such as the Eastern Caribbean, they allow people to leave an affected territory and seek protection in a neighbouring or not so neighbouring country. Similarly, there are some examples of planned relocation processes, useful risk management processes, very complex processes that are worth working on, both from a loss and damage approach and from an adaptation approach. Because we are in a region where migration is a form of adaptation; where people migrate to diversify their income, to send remittances, to not be so dependent on livelihoods that are so exposed to the climate. One can think of using this migration to help people adapt when adaptation in the place of origin is not the best solution or when people decide to migrate, which is also a right. We increasingly realise the need to work on and respect people's rights in the face of climate emergency and people on the move due to the impacts of disasters and climate change.

The floor was then given to Liliana Gamboa, project manager at Open Society Foundations. She began by acknowledging that the impact of climate change on human mobility is a pressing issue at present. It is a challenge that must be worked on together to find answers on how to address it in a scenario where the countries of the region have directly experienced the relationship between the increase in natural environmental disasters, exacerbated by climate change and migration. Worrying figures were discussed in relation to the number of people who have had to move or migrate due to this situation, and it is likely that the effects of climate change (extreme heat, drought, floods, rising sea levels, increased storms, hurricanes, etc.) will continue to exacerbate mobility trends in the coming years.

However, despite the numbers and the recognition of the importance of responding to this challenge, there is still no comprehensive, multilateral framework to address this issue. The legal framework for international protection dates back to the middle of the last century and therefore was not designed to respond to some of today's global challenges, such as climate change. How do we fill the gap to provide protection to those who are forced to move or migrate for reasons not covered by the current protection framework? Fortunately, our region has promising normative frameworks that could be translated into multiple alternatives to achieve such protection.

For this reason, a joint effort should be made to identify possible tools: legal frameworks, public policies and all relevant tools that can be used to respond to this challenge. To that end, it is important to work together on the basis of lessons learned from what has already worked, but at the same time to incorporate innovative solutions with the participation, for example, of the private sector with the technology we have today and, of course, with the direct participation of the people and communities affected, with a special focus on them specifically.

Her institution considers it important to work together to ensure that the voices of the most affected communities are present in decision-making spaces, that their needs, their traditions, their ways of life are considered, in order to avoid possible intangible losses in relation to both the impact of climate change and the solutions that are sought in this regard.

Donors, aid agencies, multilateral organisations and international development banks have a responsibility to ensure that projects address this issue by following the guidelines and recommendations that have been developed by relevant agencies to ensure that human rights are protected, and that vulnerability is not increased as a result of the impact of climate change and its solutions. They understand that a multi-stakeholder partnership approach, involving a wide range of actors, is the most effective way to address climate mobility in order to bring in the full range of available tools. For this reason, they support the work being promoted by the Global Centre for Climate Mobility, as it not only represents this multi-sectoral approach, but also presents a plan of action based on evidence and data collection at national and regional level, which will allow the development of a local, regional, and subregional agenda. This phenomenon will not be solved with just one view or one solution; it has different edges, different impacts in different geographic and economic regions, so solutions must be sought that are tailored to their needs. This is no small challenge, but the fact that we are discussing it here today with the representatives of the regional integration systems represents a great commitment and, therefore, a great step in the right direction.

FOURTH SESSION

As for the intervention of the Secretaries of the regional integration mechanisms, the Secretary General of ALADI was the first to take the floor, recalling that the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai in 2015, adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction from 2015 to 2030. An instrument that reaffirms the need to anticipate, plan for and address disaster risk reduction, identifying seven global targets and four priorities to be achieved by 2030.

The Secretary informed that, within the framework of the Treaty of Montevideo, in particular articles 7, 11 and 14, there are legal instruments available to ALADI that contribute to the implementation of the agreements and commitments of the region on sustainable development and prevention and solution of disasters caused by nature in Latin America. The partial scope agreements in which the 13 ALADI countries (including Mexico and Cuba) can participate are the mechanisms available. In addition, there is the possibility of involving other countries in the region in these agreements, with the aim of promoting response capacity and preparedness, which is the development of a culture of security and also of financial protection in the face of disasters.

In this regard, ALADI is able to participate in the convergence of investment in resilient infrastructure; in encouraging companies to adopt production methods and risk management practices and contingency plans. Not only in terms of preparedness or what is called state of alert or prevention, but also in terms of

what are really very negative impacts in this region, which affect the most vulnerable society, small and medium-sized producers and all those who do not have elements or instruments to support themselves, to recover their dignity of life. He informed that ALADI had already carried out a survey of all the effects of disasters caused by nature, not only tsunamis, but also earthquakes and everything that raises sea levels.

For this reason, he pointed out, it is important to work on identifying spaces for exchange of best practices, access to geospatial technology and information exchange and forecasting systems. The aim is to unify the information flow, and make it available to work together, and not to remain isolated in certain positions of an autarkic or separate nature in the whole Latin American region. There are issues related to knowledge, but also those related to financial and technical support to improve the capacity of countries in the use of geospatial technology and information systems for the prevention of general disasters.

Within the framework of ALADI's regional scope agreement number 6, on scientific and technological cooperation, there is an administrative commission for the exchange of information on actions, programmes and projects of national interest with the aim of gaining knowledge about the status of regional situation and planning in the field of disaster risk reduction by all Latin American integration schemes.

He recognised that there is a very important aspect, which is strategic thinking in the insertion of all these policies jointly worked on, to be able to face this situation. The most important thing is to carry out common policies to evaluate the progress and effectiveness of disaster risk reduction strategies in the region, creating a system of cooperation and coordination for the integration schemes of Latin America and the Caribbean to share information on the best practices in disaster risk reduction and, above all, bearing in mind the weight of asymmetries among countries in terms of physical, technical and financial capacity for disaster recovery.

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When the evaluation began within SELA, an assessment was made of how far the region had advanced with our specialised institutions and what was the legal framework within which it was operating. There we found many coincidences that could be the starting point to work towards regional convergence, considering that there is already a previous coordination among the organisations, there is a deep knowledge that the needs are common, some countries are more vulnerable, and others need more practice in relation to the coordination with their own national institutions. These are the starting points for carrying out work that could lead to a regional strategy, recognising the Sendai Framework as the multilateral normative mechanism, on the basis of which our specialised agencies and the countries gave the mandate to start working. As a result, it is proposed to seek some level of prioritisation that allows most of the strategies to coincide on two or three points. It was recognised that one of the main problems lies in the exchange of information, its collection and evaluation. For this reason, a methodology should be refined that allows for information on a regional scale, using a platform that already exists for this type of report; but these reports should be jointly agreed, already analysed, and enable a subsequent evaluation to be carried out. This requires in-depth coordination to see what information can be shared and on the basis of which regional information can be gathered. This would allow for a monitoring system that also matches the different systems.

Without a uniform and consensual collection of information, the assessment will not be accurate. At the same time, training activities need to be strengthened. The Permanent Secretary acknowledged that member countries sometimes criticise that the mechanisms, the Secretariats, are neither universities nor permanent education mechanisms. However, training is the only way to overcome gaps in this area, which will also help overcome poverty, gender, and capacity gaps. There again, we can have a regional framework, which could be strengthened, allowing not only for harmonisation in terms of how information is perceived, but also for sharing the structures that have been built up by the specialised agencies.

All of this, with the aim of aligning a regional action plan, which is where we want to move towards, a mechanism where we can achieve a focus of action with certain axes and evaluate the possibility of harmonising certain protocols that have already been discussed. These protocols have already been applied and evaluated, and it would be interesting if, through this mechanism of inter-secretariats, the specialised bodies could gradually standardise them. The suggested route is to continue with the dynamic of setting up working groups, where the specialists will be the ones to say whether these identified points are possible to implement jointly.

The Secretary General of SICA, Ambassador Warner, took the floor to share his experiences of best practices and lessons learned for future joint work, considering the many advances of the region in the area of disaster prevention, coordination for risk management, and inter-sectoral coordination for the implementation of strategies and policies. This is a phenomenon that needs to be addressed in an inter-sectoral manner, which is already being addressed within the framework of the Central American integration system.

He reported that the region has specific bodies dealing with climate change and risk management: CEPREDENAC, the Central American Commission for Environment and Development, the Central American Drinking Water Forum, and the Regional Commission for Water Resources, all of which act and work in coordination. A project is also being implemented between the agricultural sector and the environmental sector for the reforestation of 10,000,000 hectares in the Central American region to prevent the impact of tropical storms and hurricanes on the Caribbean coast. Food and nutritional security issues are being worked on with the FAO.

These disasters generate migration and displacement and are also being worked on with the Central American Organisation for Migration and the Central American Council for Social Integration, from a holistic and inter-sectoral viewpoint. He also reported that they are developing a cooperation fund among the member countries of the Central American Integration System, which aims to commit to contribute to a fund with the purpose of promoting cooperation among the countries in this type of best practices. A fund that would allow the member countries of the system to cooperate with each other, but also to use the platform for the triangulation of cooperation.

The Secretary General of SICA made available the lessons learned and best practices to the rest of the integration schemes, as well as offering CEPREDENAC as a space for exchange and dialogue on what has been built as a Central American integration system in terms of risk management.

Alberto Lora spoke on behalf of the Secretariat of the Andean Community, pointing out that CAN is fully prepared to support the development of a regional action plan, with the resources it has and the work it has done on the subject. He also stressed the importance of participating in specific spaces and sharing experiences. Silvia Henden, also from CAN, added that climate change has accentuated and increased the incidence of adverse events, affecting territories that were previously unaffected. She suggested humanising the approach, preventing vulnerability from becoming a permanent stage, in which no human being can fully develop. It is a matter of complementing the efforts being made by States, with the participation of the different strategic actors involved in risk management. The countries of the Andean Community, through the Andean Ad Hoc Committee for Disaster Prevention (CAPRADE), carried out different joint activities with the purpose of training the technical sector, strengthening policies, as well as prioritising the issue of territorial development planning.

They reported on the work carried out since 2019, prioritising the topics; they identified the need to make greater efforts in preparedness, focusing on the identification of high-risk areas. To that end, it is essential to work on updating vulnerability maps and making them available to the population and local and regional authorities, so that they can help citizens find areas that really allow them to have a harmonious development, that allow them to lead their lives in such a way that they do not have difficulties or are not continually exposed to emergencies and disasters. This task is one of the activities foreseen in the implementation plan. It is very important to identify risk scenarios and to be able to anticipate and mitigate the effects. Areas where the support of specialised technical cooperation is needed.

In the final stage of the event, the Permanent Secretary of SELA took the floor to invite all the organisations present and CEPREDENAC to the Workshop for the construction of strategic guidelines for disaster risk management in Latin America and the Caribbean, organised by SELA and expected to take place on 6 and 7 June in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This is a first initiative aimed at bringing together the United Nations scheme for disaster risk management with the scope of action of the disaster risk authorities of the Andean Community and the authorities of Mercosur. In this specific framework, we are looking for a space for discussion aimed at aligning a regional strategy. Specialised institutions can help us find strategic guidelines.

Finally, the Director for Disaster Risk Reduction of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), Ana Leticia Ramirez, made some clarifications, informing that the ACS has a technical body called the Caribbean Commission, and that the Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative was adopted by this special group of the Association. Thus, this Initiative is becoming a consortium, as it also has the support of the United Nations Climate Change Office, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, and the International Organisation for Migration. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction is also involved, and all these UN agencies are committed to supporting a region that is clearly identified as one of the most vulnerable to the impact of climate change.

She pointed out that there is a need to move towards adaptation actions. She proposed that the different Secretariats of the regional bodies could join this initiative in a consolidated manner. To that end, it was also important to explore the possibility of interacting with the legislative powers of all the countries, as it was important that the agreements reached could be reflected in the legislation of the different countries.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions were presented by Mr. Jean Paul Guevara, focal point for inter-secretariat work of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA). Mr. Guevara began by stressing that this was an event that gives continuity to the agenda for inter-secretariat work, agreed upon by the various integration mechanisms. However, beyond promoting cooperation and convergence of agendas, it could already be observed, after three sessions, that the dynamics required a comprehensive and systemic vision of interrelated issues.

Specifically, the event made it clear that disaster risk reduction is a technical, social, political, and environmental management process that must be sustained over time. It is therefore a planned and comprehensive process that involves the complementarity of inter-sectoral capacities, but also of local, national, and regional resources. The aim is to adopt a set of operational knowledge and organisation to implement policies and strategies that can reduce the impact of natural hazards and environmental and anthropogenic disasters. These policies and strategies must be prospective, as they must avoid the occurrence of the phenomena; they must also be corrective, in the face of existing risks; and reactive, as they require immediate, emergency responses.

On this basis, four themes for work towards regional convergence were identified:

- 1** Generation of information, evidence and collection of data on disaster risk and mobility related to climate change. All this associated with the strengthening of training activities, which was recognised as a need by the participants.
- 2** Include disaster risk considerations and factors in the design of social policy, for which it will be necessary to work on the construction of regional harmonisation platforms.
- 3** Develop business continuity and post-disaster recovery planning strategies with a regional approach.
- 4** All of the aforementioned issues, directed towards the creation of a Regional Action Plan, as the articulating centre of actions and initiatives, within the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are some recommendations arising from the concepts and ideas expressed by the panellists and the moderator:

- 1** There was a broad agreement on several central aspects, and it was ratified that the meeting was an achievement, since starting to exchange and identify mechanisms for immediate cooperation is already an achievement.
- 2** However, many challenges remain, and it is necessary to deepen a mechanism in which technical groups can work on regional approaches, with the objective of making concrete public policy proposals to a regional mechanism, which could be SELA.
- 3** It is recommended to continue coordination with specialised bodies, as has been the case since the first meeting, regardless of the degree of specialisation of the integration mechanisms, recognising the predisposition that exists to continue working together.
- 4** Participants established the importance of advancing towards the creation of a system of cooperation and coordination of the integration schemes of Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to share information on best practices on risk reduction.
- 5** It was considered fundamental to socialise the results achieved in the three meetings with the appropriate bodies, in order to make the results of this effort visible and to continue working together with the other secretariats, in accordance with the approved agenda.
- 6** The dates of 27 and 28 June, in Uruguay, were confirmed for the next meeting on productive value chains. There is enough time to work on interesting material.