



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, San Jose, Costa Rica

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



Photo by Pedro Soto, USAID/OFDA

Panelists from Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Nicaragua participate in the CEPREDENAC-USAID/OFDA "Regional Forum for Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management in Central America, Mexico and the Dominican Republic: Joining Institutional Efforts," held in Antigua, Guatemala, earlier this year. More than 60 people attended.

Promoting DRR in Central America

USAID/OFDA is collaborating closely with the Central American Coordination Center for the Prevention of Disasters (CEDPREDENAC) on various initiatives to promote disaster risk reduction (DRR) in the region.

Shared goals include establishing a Central American task force for rapid response, working with other donors and agencies to integrate disaster risk management into formal and informal education, improving the quality of local and regional DRR capacity building efforts, and helping guide public policy governing comprehensive risk management.

Toward these goals, USAID/OFDA is sponsoring and will participate in CEPREDENAC's upcoming Regional Conference on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management, scheduled to take place in El Salvador on July 21. The conference is a precursor to the Central American Summit on Comprehensive Risk Management, "For the Right to Prevention," scheduled to take place on

December 16 of this year, as part of the XXXVII Summit of the Central American Integration System (SICA). CEPREDENAC is part of the SICA.

During the conference next month, USAID/OFDA representatives and consultants from throughout Central America plan to share DRR best practices and lessons learned.

Last December, leaders of the two organizations signed a memorandum of understanding to work together on areas of mutual interest in line with CEPREDENAC's Central American Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Policy (PCGIR) and USAID/OFDA's Regional DRR Strategy.

In late January, USAID/OFDA and CEPREDENAC held a consultation forum with stakeholders, including representatives of national governments, international donors, the Red Cross and United Nations agencies to review the PCGIR and USAID/OFDA strategy and identify shared DRR priorities in Central

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DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

USAID/OFDA Signs Letter of Understanding with ONEMI

USAID/OFDA has signed a letter of understanding with Chile's National Emergency Office (ONEMI) to strengthen disaster risk management and emergency preparedness.

The agreement provides guidelines for inter-institutional cooperation and technical assistance that contribute to achieving mutual disaster risk reduction and response preparedness objectives of both institutions.

Specifically, the two organizations agreed to cooperate in capacity building for urban search and rescue, damage assessment and needs analysis, incident command system implementation, promotion of disaster risk management in schools and universities, and the development of a program for forest fire prevention and control. They also agreed to promote the participation of the private sector in the National System of Civil Protection in Chile.

Cooperation between USAID/OFDA and ONEMI was strengthened after the February 27, 2010, earthquake and tsunami, when USAID/OFDA offered Chile assistance and provided medical equipment, power generators, water treatment units, and materials to build 1,000 shelters.

USAID/OFDA Senior Regional Advisor (SRA) Tim Callaghan and ONEMI Director Vicente Núñez signed the letter of understanding at the U.S. Embassy in Santiago on June 1.

During the signing ceremony, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires James L. (Buddy) Williams said the agreement "is one more example of the deep, wide, and growing cooperation between our countries" and "makes the cooperation that already exists between USAID/OFDA and ONEMI official."



Photo courtesy of the U.S. Embassy in Santiago

USAID/OFDA SRA Tim Callaghan, left, and ONEMI Director Vicente Núñez sign the letter of understanding to promote DRR.

DISASTER RESPONSE PREPAREDNESS



Photos by Auriana Koutnik, USAID/OFDA

Team members of the USAID/OFDA-supported Regional Disaster Assistance Program (RDAP) work with staff from ADRA Chile during a training session on temporary shelter construction during the RDAP annual review and planning meeting. During the meeting, held from May 23 to 27 in Miami, Florida, the RDAP team also visited the facilities of Miami-Dade Fire Rescue, the Miami-Dade County Emergency Operations Center, and the wind laboratory at Florida International University.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

RDAP Signs Additional Small Grants To Support DRR Work in the Region

The RDAP has signed four additional small grants to provide funding for DRR projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. The RDAP launched the small grants program in April with the signing of a \$30,000 grant to the CRUSA Foundation in Costa Rica.

Since then, the RDAP has signed other small grant agreements in Belize, Brazil, Chile, and the Dominican Republic.

In Belize, the program is providing \$30,000 to the Belize Red Cross to fund a five-month project to complete the refurbishment of hurricane/flood shelters and bolster independently powered communications systems in four flood-vulnerable communities of the Belize River Valley.

In Brazil, the program is providing \$30,000 to Caritas to implement a 12-month project to increase rural communities' resilience to drought in the northeast part of the country.

In Chile, the RDAP is providing \$34,000 to the Fundación Integra for a nine-month project to assist 13 children's daycare centers in the Los Ríos Region with basic emergency planning, equipment, and infrastructure improvement to ensure that the centers are prepared to respond during adverse events.

In the Dominican Republic, the small grants program is providing \$46,500 to the Fundación Integral Niños Felices de America to support a 12-month project to implement environmental protection and mitigation work in the El Chavón neighborhood of the La Chapea Glen, in Los Alcarrizos Municipality.

Collaborating with CEPREDENAC

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America, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic.

Representatives from both organizations met again in April to develop a work plan that defines the specific activities in which the two organizations will collaborate.

"We want to unite efforts to create more impact with our DRR activities in the region. Disaster preparedness and risk management are attracting more interest from the governments of Central America, especially the presidents and other high-level officials. The countries are each working to create their own national strategy for comprehensive disaster risk management," said USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor Sidney Velado.

"We are just beginning to get started collaborating closely with CEPREDENAC; we have a number of joint initiatives including creating a Central American urban search and rescue task force, working with universities to insert DRR themes into formal education, and sharing best practices and lessons learned," he added.

This is the first time USAID/OFDA has signed a work agreement with CEPREDENAC. Representatives from the two organizations plan to meet regularly to review advances in the work plan.

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