

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)

20th MEETING OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, November 22 – 23, 2012

Final Rapporteur's Report

DAY 1

I. Opening ceremony

The 20th Meeting of the Special Committee for Disaster Risk Reduction was held in Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on November 22-23, 2012. The head table comprised the Dominican Republic as Chairman, represented by H.E. Dr. José Serulle Ramia; Guadeloupe - France - and Suriname as Vice Chairmen, represented by Dr. Marianne-Therese Pepin, President of the Co-operation Commission of the Regional Council of Guadeloupe and Mr. Shefferon Kartowikromo, Head of Mission of Suriname in Trinidad and Tobago; with Colombia serving as Rapporteur, represented by Dr. María Margarita Arias, Coordinator of International Co-operation of the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management - UNGRD. Also at the head table were the Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States, Ambassador Alfonso Múnera Cavadia and the ACS Director of Transport and Disaster Risk Reduction, Mr. Eduardo José González Angulo. The Meeting was attended by 18 Member States, 1 Associate Member, 1 Observer Country, 23 International Organisations and 2 Trinidad and Tobago bodies. The complete list of participants is attached to this Rapporteur's Report as **Annex I**.

The **Secretary General of the ACS** delivered his welcome remarks and began by thanking all participants for their attendance. He highlighted the work of the ACS in fulfilling its mission to assemble the Member States, as well as International Organisations and to serve as a platform for co-operation. He recalled that CARICOM originally proposed the creation of the ACS for the purpose of having an Organisation to bring together all countries, to create what we have wanted to call the Greater Caribbean. He also reiterated the importance of this meeting, since the problems of natural disasters related to human actions, as well as the effects of climate change, must be included in the concerns of all peoples and in their fight for survival. He therefore urged States to approve the important projects to be discussed at this Meeting such as: the second phase of the SHOCS project, in addition to the Green Response and Urban Risk projects, to name a few. He recalled the vulnerability of the countries of the region and the need to have protection against disasters, whose ultimate goal is to save human lives. Lastly, he expressed his appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the entire team of the ACS Directorate for Disaster Risk Reduction, and thanked in particular the Director, Eduardo José González Angulo, for the work done since his arrival at the ACS, to whom he not only expressed his admiration and respect, but also his deep friendship.

The **Dominican Republic**, in its capacity as Chairman, represented by H.E. Dr. José Serulle Ramia, delivered his opening remarks, thanking everyone for their attendance and expressing his delight over having seen such an extensive agenda, which demonstrates the enormous effort of the Directorate for Disaster Risk Reduction, particularly the tremendous work carried out by its Director, Eduardo José González Angulo, to whom he expressed sincerest thanks and congratulations, indicating that the guidelines that he has outlined will continue. He further underscored the economic losses caused by the numerous disasters in the region, unplanned urbanisation, the lack of territorial planning, among other problems. Thus, the ACS, with its advancements and achievements, owing to its many projects underway and its partners involved, is plotting the course to be followed in order to reduce the risk brought about by disasters and to support the road to development. The full speech is attached to this Rapporteur's Report as **Annex II**.

Colombia, represented by Dr. María Margarita Arias, Coordinator of International Co-operation of the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD) presented the report on the tenure of the Chairman during the period 2011-2012, as well as the progress made in the initiatives and projects approved by the countries of the ACS, supported by the Colombian Government. Dr. Arias called attention to the frameworks of reference of the UNGRD, the achievements and advancements made during this period, in addition to disaster risk management in Colombia. She placed special emphasis on the projects led by the country, such as: the "International Diploma (virtual) in disaster risk reduction management" of the Advanced School of Public Administration of Colombia (ESAP), "Earthquake-Resistant Cities" and "Urban Risk". Lastly, she presented the strategic challenges involved in managing disaster risk reduction, which were identified by the country during its tenure as Chairman and which is placed at the disposal of the ACS. The complete presentation is attached to this Rapporteur's Report as **Annex III**.

The **ACS Director of Transport and Disaster Risk Reduction** delivered his welcome remarks and thanked all in attendance for their participation in this Committee. He thanked in particular, the Secretary General, the Chair and the Dominican Republic for their words and also Guadeloupe and Suriname for serving as Vice Chairmen. The Director further thanked Colombia for the presentation of the report on the tenure of the Chairman during 2011, which was delivered by Dr. María Margarita Arias, who acted on behalf of Dr. Carlos Iván Márquez, to whom a special greeting was extended. The Director expressed his satisfaction with the great attendance at the meeting, in which there was participation from more than 20 countries and approximately 60 persons, this being one of the most important meetings in the history of the ACS. Thus, he conveyed his gratitude to Trinidad and Tobago for its constant support and assistance in convening this meeting, as well as the Government of Finland for its sizeable contribution to the "SHOCS" project. The Director thanked all his ACS colleagues and especially the team of the Directorate for Disaster Risk Reduction for their efforts, attitude and co-operation. He underscored in particular, Trinidad and Tobago's commitment to the "Green Response" Project, especially Dr. Stephen Ramroop, who will present this pioneer project in the area of Disaster Risk Reduction. He further announced the projects to be presented on the second day of the meeting and shared with the participants the fact that the Saint Marc Plan of Action was updated and rendered consistent with the priorities identified in the Hyogo Framework for Action. The Director thanked CARICOM, CEPREDENAC and CDEMA for their good intentions and projects, all the national and international organisations present for their valuable participation and support, in addition to those who could not attend the Meeting. He also presented the initiatives to be analysed during the course of the meeting and congratulated

the countries responsible for their respective presentations and reiterated the need for disaster risk reduction in order to save lives.

II. **Approval of the agenda and procedural matters**

The **Chairman** proceeded with the approval of the agenda, which was unanimously approved.

III. **Presentation of the advancements made in the "SHOCS" Project**

Dr. Martti Heikinheimo, Consulting Service Development Director of the Finnish Meteorology Institute (FMI), presented the results of the Project: "Strengthening Hydro-Meteorological Operations and Services in the Caribbean small island developing states (SHOCS)". The complete presentation is attached as **Annex IV**.

Dr. Heikinheimo placed special emphasis on the workshops, meetings held with disaster management organisations, agencies and those responsible for early warning systems. He explained the objectives of the project, taking into account the context of ACS countries, who have a high vulnerability to disasters. In turn, he placed particular focus on the increase in threats and the reality of climate change. He also mentioned the missions made throughout the evaluations conducted on capabilities with respect to planning, disaster risk reduction, early warning systems, etc, identifying the following needs: "strengthening the capacity for Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems (MHEWS) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in order to boost institutional capabilities, strengthening of technical methods and means to improve risk detection, follow-up and monitoring, strengthening of the capacity for communication clocks, warnings and notices, political recognition and legislation for DRR and MHEWS, training in basic competencies in the area of meteorology and disaster management, as well as the enhancement of methods and techniques to disseminate notices, alerts and warnings".

Dr. Heikinheimo also made mention of the next 5 regional priorities in the framework of the SHOCS Project: standardise the communications platform with standard operating procedures, strengthen the capacity of the SRC (Seismic Research Centre) to provide real information 24 hours a day, harmonise the visualisation of colour codes for the areas in the system pertaining to climate warnings and indicators of high risk areas, training in the principles of quality management and results-based management, establishment of performance indicators and an extensive process for auditing agencies that are certified in the Caribbean on Quality Management Systems (QMS), certified agencies. He underscored the work carried out on training aimed at countries in the region. He further indicated that aeronautical services need improvements in quality management and must comply with ISO 9001:2008 requirements. Dr. Heikinheimo thanked all those who collaborated on this project, especially Ms. Vernesse Inniss of Barbados and Director Eduardo José González Angulo, in his capacity as Project Manager, for all the support provided.

IV. Presentation of the "SHOCS II" Project

On behalf of the Government of Finland, **Hannele Halmeranta**, who is in charge of the programme for the Caribbean, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, expressed the honour that it represents for them to be able to attend the 20th Meeting of the Special Committee for Disaster Risk Reduction, and proceeded to read the note from H.E. Mikko Pyhälä, Ambassador of Finland on special mission for the Caribbean. Said document is attached to this Rapporteur's Report as **Annex V**. Ms. Halmeranta then presented an introduction regarding the project entitled SHOCS II, in which she explained that co-operation from Finland in the Caribbean region is part of foreign policy and their international relations, thus, she expressed their desire to continue this co-operation and to have the ACS as a major ally and to continue efforts focussing especially on meteorological services. In her presentation, Ms. Halmeranta touched on the improvements and significant advancements made above all, in the areas of DRR, Early Warning Systems, etc. She announced the bases of the objectives of phase 2 of SHOCS and Finland's intention to approve the extension of the MOU between the ACS and the FMI, once the project is approved at this meeting. She also indicated that a binding agreement will be prepared to address the issue of financing for the SHOCS II. Lastly, she thanked all the partners involved in the project, the ACS, both the previous and current Secretaries General, as well as the Director of Transport and Disaster Risk Reduction of the ACS for his excellent work.

Dr. Martti Heikinheimo, presented the Project entitled SHOCS II and in his intervention, he began reporting that the FMI will continue to work with the ACS and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and made the announcement that this project will have an approximate budget of 1,000,000 Euros in order to make greater investments and to have wider coverage and better expansion of the project. He announced that the same model will be followed, as well as the same process in the same States as in Phase I, and will be based on the results achieved during this initial phase of the Project, so as to complement and not duplicate efforts. He presented the project planning guide, the results of the feasibility evaluation, taking into account regional priorities, the expected results, the specific objectives, activities such as: "training and advice to improve the maintenance and restoration of the meteorological observation stations selected, implementation of forecasting tools and production systems in the NMHS' selected, development and implementation of solutions for the common presentation and communication of early warnings", among others. The complete presentation is attached as **Annex VI** and is included in the Project Concept Document.

Dr. Heikinheimo also stressed the importance of the Saint Marc Plan of Action and reported that the phase by phase budget is outlined on pages 25 and 26 of **Annex VI**. He announced that if there are no delays, work will begin in April 2013.

The **Chairman** indicated that it is essential for the SHOCS project to enjoy continuity, for the increased benefit for everyone and expressed his absolute support.

Jamaica thanked the ACS for organising the Meeting and highlighted that country's vulnerability to disasters, especially in light of what occurred days earlier with Hurricane Sandy. It indicated that Jamaica has contributed significantly to the project and has learnt a great deal from it, strengthening its capabilities. Thus, it supports the continuation of the SHOCS project and is grateful for all the benefits generated.

Mexico congratulated the ACS and Finland on the development of this important project and expressed its solidarity and support for it.

Guadeloupe thanked Trinidad and Tobago, Colombia, Finland and in particular, Director Eduardo José González Angulo for their tremendous work. It explained that the ACS is in a vanguard position leading these initiatives, since natural disasters reduce States' capabilities, because when a disaster occurs, countries must use a portion of their budget to counteract its effects. Therefore, Guadeloupe and Martinique – France – support the continuation of the project.

Antigua and Barbuda supported the Project, underscoring that the most important aspect is the development of the common platform. It supported the second phase of the Project and thanked the ACS and everyone involved for their efforts.

Cuba pointed out that all the co-operation projects that unite the Caribbean are of prime importance and highlighted Finland's positive gesture by working in this regard. It called for this to continue being developed and to remain alive, providing all the support necessary.

Trinidad and Tobago conveyed its thanks to the Government of Finland and to the ACS. It welcomed all those who have come to Trinidad and Tobago and all those who have worked on this project, expressing its absolute support.

Guatemala thanked Finland for the project, underscored the work done in the past by the previous Secretary General and voiced its full support for the continuation of said project.

The **Secretary General** once again expressed the heartfelt thanks of the ACS to the Government of Finland and its Meteorological Institute, convinced that it has been ideal co-operation for pooling efforts between Caribbean States and international organisations, with extremely positive results for all involved. He stated that this can be unanimously approved and invited the Chairman to consider this.

The **Chairman** indicated that the ACS must persevere in its objectives and develop concrete projects that would yield results, which would be felt by our communities and peoples in order to fulfil the objectives that they have established as a Region. He announced that projects must be constantly followed up and stressed the importance of co-operation with other countries in the world, based on the concept of brotherhood and solidarity and he called for this project to be approved.

The project was unanimously approved by acclamation and the first day was closed with a resounding and lengthy applause by all in attendance.

DAY 2

The **Chairman** underlined the success of the first day of the meeting, with the unanimous approval of the continuation of the second phase of the SHOCS project. He expressed that it

was an honour to have the Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development, Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie and the Minister of Health of the Trinidad and Tobago Government, Dr. Fuad Khan attend the meeting. The Chairman welcomed all the participants.

The **Secretary General** extended a welcome to all those in attendance, especially the Honourable Ministers. He also conveyed his thanks for the presence, accompaniment and support of Trinidad and Tobago. He announced the intervention of Dr. Stephen Ramroop of the ODPM and stressed the importance of the "Green Response" project. The Secretary General also highlighted the presence of Mr. Howard Arfin, representing the IFRC. He further expressed his congratulations for the initiatives and announced that they will be presented for approval: the "Green Response" and "Urban Risk" projects.

The Honourable **Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development of Trinidad and Tobago**, Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie, delivered the opening address on the second day of the Meeting. The full address is attached to this Rapporteur's Report as **Annex VII**.

The Minister indicated that it was a pleasure and honour to attend the 20th Meeting of the ACS Special Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction and voiced his appreciation for the invitation. He began his address with an introduction pertaining to the link existing between Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, pointing out that "disaster risk reduction strategies are particularly important for the Caribbean region, due to its vulnerability to natural disasters, which have a direct impact on the open nature of the economies".

As a second point, he expressed the importance of Disaster Risk Reduction and the green response to disasters in the context of Trinidad and Tobago, explaining that the "Green Response" project presented, adopts a sustainable approach to natural disaster management, producing an important change to reacting to the immediate needs of the persons affected by disasters, maintaining a long term vision for risk management, integrating the principles and values of environmental impact and sustainable development, as well as the use of green products, processes and technologies in response to disasters and the development of rules and regulations to be used by Caribbean governments in the promotion, production and use of these products.

The Minister then gave an account of the history of human and economic losses caused by disasters in Trinidad and Tobago between 1980 and 2010. He made mention of the policy framework for the medium term 2011-2014, defining it as the change toward planning the green policy, in an attempt to safeguard the environmental resources for the use and enjoyment of future generations. Therefore, Trinidad and Tobago is strongly committed to sustainable overall development and to the importance of interrelations among planning and disaster risk reduction, development and long term recovery, as outlined at the Río +20 Conference held in Brazil in June 2012, where one of the thematic areas was the construction of resilient cities and communities, commitment to fulfilling the Hyogo Framework for Action, the importance of early warning systems, as well as the incorporation of the gender perspective into the design and implementation of all phases of disaster risk management.

With respect to the “Green Response” project, he explained that it is being developed in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding and Letter of Intention signed between the IFRC and the ACS, which consists of 4 phases, which will identify, prove and promote the use of green technology in disaster response and recovery. In this respect, he also mentioned the specific objectives of the project. He closed by making a link between Government and green economy, stressing the importance of the growth of green technologies, noting that the Government has taken the initiative to capitalise on the growing world interest in ecological products that are compatible with green technology as a new driving force for the growth and development of new industries, which with success, could participate in the global market of environmentally friendly technology. He further underscored that it is crucial to “green the economy” of our countries.

The Honourable **Minister of Health of Trinidad and Tobago**, Dr. Fuad Khan, applauded the words expressed by the Honourable Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development of Trinidad and Tobago. He emphasised the importance of the problems concerning climate change and its consequences, such as: the increase in hurricanes, storms, etc. The Minister touched on the importance of responding immediately in the event of disasters and being prepared for them. In that regard, he highlighted the response elements and their strategic placement in order to facilitate said response, such as water and energy. He further reflected on providing hospitals with elements for an immediate response to disasters. In light of the foregoing, Dr. Khan underlined the importance of the green response project and above all, the preparation of the rapid response process with products and processes that respect the environment. He also underscored the importance of information and prevention campaigns for communities and concluded by stressing that it is vital to “green technologies”.

The **Dominican Republic** applauded the remarks made by both Ministers. It highlighted the spirit of love toward the environment and the development of education toward its protection, in addition to channelling this as an investment. Lastly, it voiced its appreciation for all the interventions presented.

V. **Presentation of the “Green Response” project**

Mr. **Howard Arfin**, Regional Caribbean Representative of the IFRC, greeted all the participants and indicated that it was an honour for the IFRC to attend the Meeting and present the “Green Response” and “Urban Risk” projects, as associates of the ACS.

Mr. Arfin spoke of the advancements made since the last meeting of the SCDRR in Bogotá up to the last meeting in Panama, held in October 2012 at the offices of the IFRC. He highlighted the work done since the commencement of the projects and praised in particular, Trinidad and Tobago’s leadership, under the direction of Dr. Stephen Ramroop of the ODPM and the Colombian Government.

He acknowledged the presence of all the delegates of the Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross, including the volunteer in attendance. Mr. Arfin congratulated and thanked the Ministers for

their expressions of support and he closed his remarks by offering absolute support to the ACS in the development of all initiatives.

Dr. **Stephen Ramroop**, Executive Director of the ODPM, indicated that he was proud and delighted to have been considered by the ACS and the IFRC to head this project. He voiced his appreciation for the presentation delivered previously by the Ministers. He also reiterated the ODPM's role in Trinidad and Tobago and explained that these initiatives will also be developed in Tobago. The full presentation is attached to this Rapporteur's Report as **Annex VIII**.

Dr. Ramroop called attention to the disaster that occurred in Diego Martin, Port of Spain, in August of this year. He expressed the significance of the "Green Response" project and underscored the importance of considering the concept of green products in all cycles of the project. He announced that this model will be duplicated among all ACS countries. He further underlined several points, such as: the importance of inviting in Phase I all stakeholders, to lead the project more effectively, so as to guarantee the sound development of the subsequent phases, up to the completion of Phase IV. Dr. Ramroop also highlighted the importance of developing standards and regulations enshrined in a model law on green response and in that respect, he announced that this legislation is about to be voted on in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr. Ramroop presented the main components of the study of the first phase, in addition to the specific objectives, the processes involved in each of the phases, the route map with its 6 elements of sustainability, the components of the feasibility study, the implementation of each of the phases, the expected results of Phase I, where primarily the draft model law on green response is expected to be ready, and lastly, he made mention of the practical details such as: estimated duration and cost, collaborating institutions, executing institutions and financing institutions, such as the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, which will provide US\$70,000 (US\$50,000 in cash and a non-monetary contribution of US\$20,000), once the project is approved. The ACS has also participated in a negotiation process with its partners to mobilise the remaining US\$70,000.

Dr. Ramroop highlighted the arduous work carried out with the ACS Directorate for Disaster Risk Reduction during this period.

The **Chairman** reiterated the importance of the project for the countries and peoples of the region. He then opened the floor for the delegations to offer their opinions in that respect and finally, the project was unanimously approved by acclamation.

VI. **Presentation of the "Urban Risk" project**

Dr. **María Margarita Arias**, representing the Government of Colombia, presented the "Urban Risk" project. She recalled the overall objective of the project, as well as the creation process of the project at the Meeting in Bogotá, in Panama, the current efforts underway, including the joint work being done among the IFRC, the ACS, the CRC and the UNGRD. The full presentation is attached as **Annex IX**.

In her presentation she explained each of the phases of the project, its beneficiaries, justification and contextualisation, underscoring the exchange of knowledge and lessons learnt from sub-regional platforms, in addition to which, she highlighted global programmes such as that on “resilient cities” of the ISDR, which serve as the framework for the activities proposed. She also presented the support team and collaborators, components and activities, preliminary schedule, cost matrix (preliminary), critical risks and means, Ex-post sustainability and lastly, she indicated that negotiations already began to manage the financing among the parties and that the Colombian Government is backing this initiative and offers absolute support to the ACS.

The **Dominican Republic** conveyed its thanks for the presentation in light of the importance of reducing disaster risk in cities, in order to guarantee their sustainable development. It placed the approval of this project for the consideration of the delegates, who also unanimously approved it with absolute acclamation.

Colombia applauded the presentations and thanked the presenters. It also expressed its support for the project presented and for the ACS.

VII. **Presentation on the advancements made in the project “International Diploma (virtual) in Disaster Risk Reduction management” (ESAP)**

Dr. **María Margarita Arias**, representing the ESAP, delivered the presentation on the advancements made in the project. She indicated that last year, in the framework of the 19th Meeting of the SCDRR, the ESAP proposed that a virtual diploma in disaster risk reduction management be offered at no cost, in English and Spanish for 5 representatives selected from each Member State. She announced that its launching will be planned for 2013 due to technical and academic adjustments that are being made and that participants will be selected from each country via the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, accompanied by the ACS, in accordance with the pre-requisites defined. Lastly, she stated that a DRR project will be established by each of the countries as a final research project, which will constitute a project bank for the ACS in the area of DRR.

The **Director** mentioned that this project serves to bring together those responsible for disasters in all ACS countries and to create a support network. He further announced that the ESAP is preparing it for proposal online at no cost, based on what has been indicated by them. He also pointed out that the project will begin with the diploma in Spanish, in 2013, after that the idea is to also present it in English and hopefully in French one day.

The **Dominican Republic** called for arrangements to be made before December to commence the study programme from February of the new year. In response, the Director announced that in light of the change in Rector of the ESAP Colombia, a decision cannot be made immediately and it will be necessary to await the appointment of the new Director.

Guadeloupe thanked Colombia for its involvement in this project and underscored the fact that it is a long term project, since it deals with education, which requires steps in the future.

VIII. **Presentation of the advancements made in the Project “Risk management training centre in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic”**

Ms. **Tania Estevez**, Counsellor of the Embassy of the Dominican Republic in Trinidad and Tobago, presented not only the advancements made in the project but its structure as well. She stressed the importance of the project as a result of the massive human and economic losses caused by disasters and emphasised our countries’ vulnerability to such phenomena. She therefore requested that everyone consider means of financing the creation of this centre. The complete presentation is attached to this report as **Annex X**.

The **Chairman** noted that this is an ambitious yet productive project and one that has projection. He further announced that the building has already been constructed and that the budget can be reduced as a result. He explained that the Dominican Republic could provide additional resources. He called for a joint meeting to be held between the President of the Dominican Republic and the Secretary General of the ACS to examine financing channels to establish the centre.

Cuba supported the idea to create the centre and indicated that they have a similar initiative in this area. It pointed out that each country has a different way of acting and that everyone can add their experiences and lessons learnt so that a positive initiative could be created in a complementary fashion.

The **Chairman** invited **Cuba** to travel to the **Dominican Republic** to discuss the matter with General Paulino and thereby establish the project profile.

IX. **Presentation of the advancements made in the radio soap opera “Rough Season”**

The **Research Assistant of the Directorate for Disaster Risk Reduction of the ACS, Olivia Confiac**, presented the advancements made in the Radio Soap Opera, which is attached to this Rapporteur’s Report as **Annex XI**.

The **Chairman** expressed his appreciation for the presentation and invited everyone to continue supporting this project.

X. **Presentation of the advancements made in the Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action in the Region of the Americas**

Mr. **Henri-Francois Morand**, Assistant Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and representing the United Nations ISDR, presented the advancements made regarding the Hyogo Framework for Action, which is attached to this Rapporteur’s Report as **Annex XII**.

. He recalled the five priorities, the achievements and progress made in including the gender issue in DRR. He announced that efforts are underway to define the continuation of the Hyogo Framework for Action after 2015. Thus, it is necessary to have a meeting that would assemble all stakeholders for consultation, in order to define the priorities. He also placed emphasis on the "Resilient Cities" programme and asked that the thematic platform on Urban Risk in the Americas and the document entitled: "Making Cities Resilient Report 2012" of the ISDR be consulted.

Mexico was of the view that the five priorities continue to be the guide at all levels (local, national, regional) for ACS countries. Above all, it conveyed its thanks for the support provided by the ISDR to the ACS. It also placed its support at the disposal of the ACS to consolidate priorities as a region for the Post-Hyogo 2015. Mexico reiterated the significance of the advancements made and that it is important to clarify the expectations for the future.

The **Secretary General and the Director** expressed their thanks for the interventions. The **Director** recalled that the ACS work programme has been based on the Hyogo Framework for Action, as previously reported. They also thanked Mexico for proposing that the ACS be made the voice of countries with respect to the progress made on the Hyogo Framework for Action. The corresponding arrangements will be made for this support.

Jamaica mentioned that its disasters office has informed it that it is particularly appreciative of all the initiatives and that it fully supports and joins the projects presented.

XI. **Report on the "Natural Disasters Agreement"**

The **Director** recalled that to date, 15 countries have ratified the agreement, therefore, 3 more are required for its entry into force. He once again invited all countries to ratify it and recommended that consideration be given to the validity of said agreement.

XII. **Presentation on the Guidelines on Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance (IDRL) and the Model Law for the Implementation of the IDRL Guidelines**

Ms. **Isabelle Granger, Coordinator of the Disaster Law Programme of the IFRC**, delivered the presentation on the IDRL Guidelines. The full presentation is attached to this Rapporteur's Report as **Annex XIII**.

She pointed out that this presentation offers a general overview of the decisions taken regarding disaster laws at the "31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in December 2011". In the presentation she explained that there needs to be legal preparation for the international response to disasters and spoke of the consultation process that has been underway since 2001, which has been developed through five regional forums where there has been involvement from high level government representatives; National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; and humanitarian partners, between 2006 and 2007.

Ms. Granger focussed on all the regulatory problems associated with international relief in countries when a disaster arises, such as bureaucratic obstacles for the entry and operations of those involved in international relief efforts, in addition to the problems concerning quality and coordination, in light of shortcomings in the monitoring and regulation of international relief, among others. She also delivered a brief presentation on the international instruments that seek to regulate the provision of international disaster relief.

She highlighted mainly that these Guidelines are recommendations to governments on how to prepare not only national legal frameworks, but also institutional and policy frameworks, in order to resolve the most common problems. To support governments in using the IDRL Guidelines, the International Federation and the National Societies have provided governments with technical assistance so that they could examine their national legislation in the area of international relief.

These projects are underway or being developed in more than 20 countries, including Colombia, Haiti, Sierra Leone, Laos and Vietnam, to name a few, and the IDRL Guidelines have also been proven to be a useful instrument for generating consensus at international and regional levels. They have been recognised in no less than six UN General Assembly resolutions and have been drawn as a reference in numerous declarations and statements of international organisations, such as the ASEAN in Asia, CAPRADE in South America and the European Council and NATO in Europe.

Many have also used the IDRL Guidelines as a base for developing guiding documents for their members. Therefore, in order to implement these Guidelines in the legislation of countries, the need to establish a Model Law has been proposed and a pilot version of said Law was presented, which is striving to be improved in early 2013. Ms. Granger also placed special emphasis on the fact that they are recommendations.

Dr. Barbara Carby, President of the UWI Disaster Risk Reduction Centre presented the advancements made in the project on the adoption of the model law implemented in Jamaica between the Jamaican Red Cross and the Jamaica ODPEM. The full presentation is attached as **Annex XIV**.

The **Chairman** congratulated both presenters, as well as Jamaica, for the effort made to apply the model law in that country.

Barbados expressed its appreciation for the presentations and announced that under the guidance of CDEMA, several countries are pursuing a process to review national legislation and it further underscored the importance of the model law. Thus, it invited the participants to contact Jeremy Collymore to facilitate this process.

The **Director** underlined the fact that the guidelines are recommendations and proposed that this matter be included in the work programme as a permanent activity and that it be presented to the sub-commissions that are examining the main topics of the 5th Summit that is scheduled to take place in Haiti in 2013.

Mexico indicated that in its case, it prefers to maintain the law that is already in force instead of creating a new one. However, they have identified flaws that the model law can complement. Mexico supported the initiative to add this issue in the declaration for the 5th Summit, specifying that it should focus on providing a support facility for humanitarian aid and for the dispatching and receipt of relief.

The **Chairman** considered the proposals mentioned in the presentations and called for support to continue working on the matter. The proposals were accepted.

XIII. **Proposal for the Renewal of the “Saint Marc Plan of Action”**

The **Director** recalled the context, objective and importance of the Saint Marc Plan of Action and its recent expiration. He proposed that it be maintained for one more year and that a meeting be convened with the conference bodies that worked initially on the creation of the plan, for them to work on its renewal.

The **Chairman** urged the participants to accept the proposal to maintain the Plan of Action, since all its points are of prime importance for the sustainable development of our countries. He asked them to extend the Plan to 2020. The Meeting agreed.

XIV. **Presentation and discussion of the Work Programme for 2012-2013**

The **Director** asked that the three projects approved, in addition to the IDRL Guidelines and the model law, be included as permanent activities. This was unanimously approved. This document is attached as **Annex XV**.

XV. **Report on the status of institutional contacts by country (Secretariat)**

The **Director** requested that the Secretariat be notified of any changes that may have arisen in the focal points.

XVI. **Proposals for the date and venue of the next meeting**

The **Chairman** reported that this will be decided according to the Chairman elected during the next meeting of the Ministerial Council.

XVII. **Any other business**

The **Director** presented to the Secretariat the project "Phase I- Formulation of the Productive Project for Women in Haiti Post-Disaster (Maintenance and Improvement of Hillsides, cleaning and adaptation, management and protection works, Reforestation Programme, Irrigation Systems, Plantations, Construction, Transport)", which is a pioneer project in the area of gender in Haiti. He proposed that it be included as part of the Work Programme, complying with all the respective regulations according to the mandates of the ACS.

XVIII. **Close of the meeting**

The **Chairman** expressed thanks and congratulations for the efforts of the Director, Eduardo José González Angulo, defender of the ACS, who has worked arduously toward achieving all the goals and objectives established.

The **Secretary** also voiced his appreciation for the tremendous work carried out by Director Eduardo José González Angulo and regrettably announced his departure next year, which no one wants but which is inevitable, for personal reasons and for reasons beyond his control. He also asked the Director to stay connected to the ACS in one way or another. Lastly, the Secretary General indicated that integration is not only a policy but is also a type of forum and meeting where common objectives and needs are outlined, and these also serve as a constant source for the integration of peoples. He thanked the Dominican Republic for its service as Chairman.