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| <b>Name of the partnership or initiative:</b>   |   |
| Subregional Initiative for the Promotion and Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)   |   |
| <b>Expected initiation:</b>   | January 2003  |
| <b>Expected completion:</b>   | January 2005  |
| <b>Partners involved:</b>   |   |
| <b>Governments:</b>   | Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama  |
| <b>Intergovernmental organizations:</b>   | Central American Coordination Center for Natural Disaster Prevention (CEPREDENAC), Central American Integration System (SICA), UN/ISDR Secretariat    |
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| <b>Main objective:</b>  |   |
| The main objective is to contribute to risk reduction in Central America through the effective implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and the action points of Agenda 21. |   |

Given the frequency, variety and magnitude of the adverse natural phenomena that affect the Central American isthmus, and the vulnerability of its inhabitants, risk reduction is a key prerequisite to achieving sustainable development in the subregion.

Agenda 21 contains significant action points for hazard and risk reduction, particularly in the chapters on Sustainable Human Settlements, Environment and Development, the Planning and Management of Land Resources, Drought, and Protection of the Quality and Supply of Freshwater. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) can help to systematize the activities underway to meet these challenges and consolidate the many efforts aimed at risk reduction and environmental protection in Central America.

**Expected results:**

*Institutional and community capacity building in risk management.* Hazard and vulnerability reduction can only work if all sectors are involved. Both formal and informal training in risk management is required.

*Strengthening risk reduction at the local level.* Emphasis would be placed on local government, but with the active involvement of the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions.

*Strengthening risk-reduction institutions at the national and subregional level.* Scientific and technical training initiatives would be strengthened, including the provision of technical equipment and programs to help risk management professionals and scholars to keep up to date on the current literature and state-of-the-art technology for research and forecasting of natural phenomena and vulnerability trends.

*The exchange of experiences and research findings in risk management* in such areas as geology, meteorology, hydrology, risk reduction, development initiatives, and access to new technologies.

**Specific targets of the partnership/initiative and time-frame for their achievement:**

**Targets:**

Raising public awareness of the environmental conditions, and the hazards and vulnerabilities, which put communities at risk, to the point where a significant increase in media content and the number and quality of public initiatives regarding these issues has been achieved.

Promoting and facilitating citizen participation in risk reduction, as measured by the number of relevant local training activities, the number of grassroots organizations involved in disaster reduction, and the growth in the membership of such groups.

Promoting a culture of prevention among the young, measured by changes in the school curricula and informal training activities directed at minors.

Raising the awareness of decision-makers regarding the need to incorporate risk management into their planning, and providing them with the training to do so, measured by the number or enhanced quality of local risk reduction programs or projects.

Building the risk management capacity of municipal governments and other local stakeholders, measured by the development and implementation of local emergency plans that incorporate disaster prevention and mitigation.

Building the capacity of governmental, academic and scientific institutions to promote sustainable development processes, carry out research on the hazards and vulnerabilities prevalent in the subregion, and increase forecasting accuracy, as shown by the inclusion of risk management and disaster prevention in national policies and practices.

Providing Central American institutions with the equipment and training needed to provide better hazard and vulnerability information to the population, measured by the increase of public information messages and media coverage of disaster-related issues and prevention measures.

Encouraging the exchange of information among institutions or bodies that have the technology, research capabilities and experience needed to reduce vulnerability to disasters, as shown in the growth of relevant subregional publications, electronic mailing lists, Web sites, and other networking mechanisms.

**Timeframe:** Two years.

**Coordination and implementation mechanism:**

Each of the countries in the subregion will appoint an institution to act as its focal point for the initiative. It will be an institution dedicated to risk management, disaster prevention, or sustainable development.

The coordination and implementation mechanism has not yet been defined. However, it will involve one of the subregional organizations that are partners in the initiative, such as SICA or CEPREDENAC. One of these will act as regional coordinator.

At the national level, coordination will be handled by the chosen focal points.

Country representatives will hold planning and follow-up meetings every three months to report on the progress of the initiative and exchange information, experiences and success stories.

**Funding arrangements:**

Funding will rely on international institutions such as the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE) and bilateral donor agencies such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The countries in the subregion will provide matching funds.

**Arrangements for capacity building and technology transfer:**

- Coordinating institutions (subregional and national) will be strengthened through greater research and training in risk management methodologies, techniques and technologies, including forecasting methods and tools.
- Training will also be provided to local governments and other local stakeholders, and awareness raising campaigns will be carried out to involve decision-makers and the general population.
- Knowledge and technology transfer, a key component, will focus on cutting-edge approaches and tools that are, nonetheless, appropriate to the subregion.

**Links of partnership/initiative with ongoing sustainable development activities at the international or regional level, if any:**

The *Central American Integration System (SICA)*, created in 1991, was one of the outcomes of the insight by regional leaders that Central America should lead in the search for solutions to its own problems, including the civil wars that had plagued Central America for decades and came to an end with the Esquipulas II Peace Accord of 1987 – one of the few enduring peace treaties in recent decades. It is active in promoting the integration of the Isthmus, from international trade negotiations to the protection of 7% of the world's biodiversity, in spite of measuring no more than 500,000 Km<sup>2</sup> and having no more than 0.6% of the world's population.

*ISDR* is the UN-General-Assembly-mandated follow-up mechanism to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), an unprecedented effort by the international community to stress that disaster risk reduction is an essential component of sustainable development. The ISDR continues to promote scores of initiatives around the world to promote effective disaster prevention, mitigation and response, including the highlighting and dissemination of best practices around the globe.

*CEPREDENAC*, part of SICA and a direct result of the IDNDR, was established in 1994 during a regional presidential summit. It has produced and implemented a Subregional Action Plan involving the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), UNESCO, and the governments of France, Germany and the Netherlands. A substantial number of initiatives involving a variety of sectors – governmental, private, academic – has shown the value of coordination in one of the regions of the world most prone to natural disasters such as Hurricane Mitch, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions

**Monitoring arrangements:**

Monitoring will be entrusted to the subregional coordinating body, whether CEPREDENAC or SICA, with the support of the focal points in each country.

**Note:**

While this initiative is still in the design stage, and not all details have been finalized, it will undoubtedly contribute to risk reduction in Central America, and complement efforts to achieve Agenda 21's objective of promoting sustainable development for the benefit of current and future generations.