



# REPORT ON THE HIGH-LEVEL VIRTUAL DIALOGUE OF THE PROSUR DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES

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## Executive Report



Secretaría de  
**EMERGENCIA  
NACIONAL**



# HIGH-LEVEL VIRTUAL DIALOGUE OF THE PROSUR DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES

## Introduction

This workshop was held within the framework of the activities of the PROSUR Thematic Group on Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Resilient Development. It was organized by the Office of National Emergency (ONEMI) within Chile's Ministry of the Interior and Public Security, as the coordinator of the Group, jointly with Paraguay's National Emergency Secretariat (SEN), both in their capacity as members of the troika for the leadership of PROSUR.

Overall, the framework of public policies on DRM currently in force in the PROSUR countries has been mainly designed to address the risks of natural or anthropic disasters, and less clearly to address health risks such as epidemics and pandemics. In the context of the current COVID-19 global pandemic, even though the DRM or Civil Protection governing bodies have participated in different ways in supporting the response to this health emergency, ad hoc platforms have been frequently used to coordinate actions, resorting partially to the strengths and lessons learned by the DRM/Civil Protection National Systems.

In view of the above, this workshop has sought to contribute to the exchange of ideas about the roles and actions of the different DRM or Civil Protection governing bodies in the context of the current pandemic, both in their usual DRM activities and in their support to the response to the effects of the health crisis.

This document summarizes and systematizes the exchanges that took place during the workshop, which was attended by representatives of the PROSUR member countries —with the exception of Argentina—, as well as by representatives of Bolivia and Uruguay in their capacity as countries invited to the event. The list of participants is provided in Annex 1.

## SESSION 1

### Actions Developed by PROSUR Risk Management Organizations in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Guiding Questions:

- What tasks your organization performs primarily in response and recovery amidst your country's national effort in the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What projections does your country have for the recovery phase of the health emergency?

As of the date of this document, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have reported COVID-19 7,475,344 cases and 282,419 deaths,<sup>1</sup> being one of the most affected regions. In the context of this situation, the DRM institutions have sought to minimize the risks of other threats, which demand ongoing preparedness efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> COVID-19 Situation Report, Inter-American Development Bank. Available at <https://www.iadb.org/es/coronavirus/situacion-actual-de-la-pandemia> as of September 3, 2020.

The participants agreed on the fact that the countries were not prepared to face a pandemic such as COVID-19, which entails a high human and economic impact. However, this circumstance has opened up opportunities to strengthen the health systems, design new policies, and put Disaster Risk Management (DRM) on the political agenda of the PROSUR member countries.

The crosscutting impacts of the pandemic have demanded that the states remain highly involved in the health emergency for an extended period of time, which is not similar to emergencies or disasters involving a shorter time horizon. This has meant that each of the countries has addressed the situation differently, according to their institutional, political, economic, social, cultural and geographic contexts.

In view of the above, it is of strategic importance to exchange experiences, lessons learned and best practices that contribute to establishing how to work in the future in the preparation, response and cooperation between countries for a comprehensive recovery in the face of this type of emergency. DRM is fundamental for public policies concerned with sustainable development, but its importance acquires new dimensions and urgency in health emergencies.

#### Constitutional states of exception

With the objective of containing the spread of COVID-19, the countries have adopted measures enshrined in their constitutions to establish the lockdown of the population, such as quarantines and curfews, in the whole or part of their territory, border closures and other prevention measures. The actions initially taken involved limited periods for these restrictions, but these had to be extended and modified according to the epidemiological reality of each country.

In countries where the armed and security forces are part of the National DRM/Civil Protection System coordinating institutions, such forces have played an important role in the enforcement of the lockdown measures and movement limitations established by the national authorities.

#### Health sector leadership

The countries' presentations agreed that the Ministries of Health have led the response to the COVID-19 pandemic from high-level platforms established in an ad hoc manner to address the pandemic within the Presidencies of the Republics.

Even though some of these platforms mentioned in the workshop —such as the Directorate for the Comprehensive Management of COVID-19 (Colombia) and the COVID 19 National Command (Peru)— provide for the participation of the National DRM/Civil Protection System governing bodies, the coordination capacities of these systems were not always considered at the beginning of the response to the emergency, and their present involvement is different in each country.

In the case of Ecuador, the Risk and Emergency Management National Service took charge of the secretariat of the National Emergency Operations Committee for pandemic response purposes. Other countries resorted to their Emergency Operations Centers, both at the national and territorial levels (Colombia, Chile, Brazil, Ecuador and Guyana), to facilitate coordination bodies.

#### Differences in the size and administrative organization of the countries

Both the size and the administrative organization of the PROSUR member countries represent different contexts that have raised different challenges in the areas of coordination, planning and response to needs posed by the pandemic.

In Brazil, for example, due to the federative nature of the country, the planning and response actions were the responsibility of the different states, which received technical guidelines from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Interior at the national level. On the other hand, in Guyana, actions were planned and implemented at the central level on account of the country's size, with the Ministry of Health and the Civil Defense Commission playing a key role.

Overall, countries such as Colombia, Chile, Guyana and Paraguay resorted to coordination and response actions defined at the national level, while in countries such as Brazil, Ecuador and Peru the autonomy levels of the different territories had to be necessarily considered when defining the actions to be taken.

Even though the different National DRM/Civil Protection Systems of the PROSUR countries take into account these administrative realities in their emergency preparedness and response tasks, the DRM coordination mechanisms established have not been considered or used in the initial phases of the pandemic. Countries such as Colombia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru stated that these territorial coordination networks were used in the context of the pandemic as soon as they became aware of their existence.

#### *Actions conducted by the governing bodies of the DRM/Civil Protection National Systems*

Each of the countries that participated in the workshop discussed some of the actions carried out by the governing bodies of their own National DRM/Civil Protection System regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiatives undertaken by these institutions, which are detailed below, are only the ones mentioned during the workshop, as there may be others that are not included in this document on account of the nature of the workshop and the limited time assigned for the speeches.

- **Brazil**

- The Risk and Disaster Management Center has provided support to the Emergency Operations Center established by the Ministry of the Interior in the management of the integrated coordination of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Chile**

- The operational continuity of the National Early Warning Center has been ensured, under the lockdown and health security conditions, with the purpose of securing its critical role of monitoring risk and emergency situations.
- The digital platforms of the Office of National Emergency have been strengthened to ensure the sustainability of the prevention and preparedness functions and tasks of the National Civil Protection System, enabling the continuity of activities such as training and simulations.
- Taking into account the COVID-19 context, adjustments have been made to the protocols for earthquakes and tsunamis to avoid unnecessary evacuations and adapt the essential health security and social distancing measures.
- Within the framework of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Office of National Emergency has been specifically given the task of standardizing and coordinating the corpse management and transportation procedures.
- The health authorities, among others, promote taking advantage of the lessons learned and of the Civil Protection National System networks that are consolidated on a territorial basis for their use in any type of emergency.

- **Colombia**

- Before the first case in the country was reported on January 31, 2020, the National Disaster Risk Management Unit activated the National Disaster Risk Management System, and a unified command post was established.
- Furthermore, the National Disaster Risk Management System has adapted its guidelines for emergency and disaster response in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The National Disaster Risk Management Unit has maintained ongoing coordination with the sectoral and territorial DRM bodies (DRM departmental and municipal councils), with which a unified record of affected people was created, identifying 170,000 affected persons who received humanitarian aid in the form of food.
- The beneficiaries included adults over the age of 70, migrants, vulnerable population per territory, and indigenous and Afro-descendent communities, among others.
- The National Disaster Risk Management Unit has mobilized aid (personal protective equipment, food, health assistance) to be provided to the communities that so require it.

- **Ecuador**

- The Risk and Emergency Management National Service and civil society and private sector institutions have coordinated the granting of money assistance known as vouchers for family protection and development as well as the delivery of humanitarian aid kits.
- The Service has contributed to the approval of temporary shelters and of equipment for the operation of health isolations centers.
- The Service has coordinated and supported the transportation of more than 15,000 Ecuadorian citizens in humanitarian flights.

- **Guyana**

- In addition to providing logistical support to the Ministry of Health (by ensuring that basic services be delivered to the health centers), the Civil Defense Committee has coordinated within the Emergency Operations Center the delivery of economic aid packages to the families in the form of vouchers and has facilitated access to food to the communities located on the coast of the country.
- The reception and distribution of supplies for COVID-19 testing in the country has been coordinated with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency.
- Work has been carried out jointly with ACNUR and the International Organization for Migration in order to establish safe conditions for Venezuelan migrants through the provision of shelter, basic services and food.

- **Paraguay**

- The National Emergency Secretariat forms part of the National Defense Council, presided over by the President of the Republic, which has supported the coordination of humanitarian flights and the establishment of health shelters for passengers arriving at the country to isolate themselves in quarantine (14 days) before meeting their families.
- The National Emergency Secretariat has implemented a food assistance program for urban, indigenous and rural communities, as well as the delivery of prepared food to health shelters and of money transfers to vulnerable families.
- Due to the powers for the procurement of goods and services in emergency situations granted to it by law, the National Emergency Secretariat has supported the Health Ministry

and the National Defense Council in their humanitarian logistics efforts by resorting to the provisions of such law.

- **Peru**

- The National Institute of Civil Defense has been assigned responsibilities in the transportation of persons, the distribution of humanitarian assistance and the follow-up on the delivery of this aid together with the municipalities.
- In addition, the National Institute of Civil Defense has been in charge of verifying compliance with the health safety protocols during the departure and arrival of international flights.
- Furthermore, the National Institute of Civil Defense has coordinated the flights between provinces for the return of more than 47,749 persons to their regions of origin, monitoring compliance with health protocols during embarkation and disembarkation.
- The National Institute of Civil Defense has distributed 321.5 tons of humanitarian aid (food, mattresses, tents, beds, blankets, etc.) both in shelters and directly to the population affected by COVID-19.
- Through the country's municipalities, almost 2.5 millions of basic family food baskets have been distributed among the most vulnerable households.

## **SESSION 2**

### **Exchange of Experiences, Prospects for Recovery and Cooperation**

Guiding Questions:

- What are the prospects for your country and your organization in the recovery period from the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What communication channels should operate in disaster situations in the context of the pandemic?
- Should PROSUR adopt a permanent mechanism for the exchange of experiences and best practices in DRM within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic? Which one?

Taking into account that this health emergency has been technically faced by the Ministries of Health, it became evident that these ministries did not necessarily have the experience and capacity to conduct an inter-institutional coordination with a systemic approach that considered both the different sectors of the state and society and the different territorial levels.

As of the date of this report, the full potential of the National DRM/Civil Protection Systems has not been used yet. Many of these systems have collaboration protocols and agreements in force and available to be used in emergency situations. An important part of such protocols and agreements are applicable to the current health emergency, but the creation of parallel procedures has been recurrent.

This has evidenced that the coordination capacities are highly valued, both within and between countries. Therefore, there is a consensus regarding the need to position the National DRM/Civil Protection Systems as effective managers of emergencies and disaster risk reduction so that advantage is taken of the installed capacities and the coordination platforms and protocols in force are used.

Along these lines, in Peru, the National Center for Disaster Risk Estimation, Prevention and Reduction (CENEPRED) has designed a pilot model for risk analysis and the construction of risk scenarios for COVID-19, which allows guiding the work of the Ministry of Health, in the detection of hot spots and the trend that is in the process and development of infection and contagion, and this in turn allows it to develop its prevention and disaster risk reduction plans and preparations for the response to COVID-19, based on this, it is sought involve sub-national and local sectors in the logic of the Risk Management System, recognizing the competencies of the different actors and promoting articulation and complementarity in the work that each one has in the face of the pandemic

Given the considerable evidence of experiences and actions carried out by the different National DRM/Civil Protection Systems in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of the PROSUR-DRM Platform (<https://grd.foroprosur.org/>) is encouraged to share documents and material prepared in the COVID-19 context, which may serve as best practices for the response and recovery processes.

All that was discussed during this workshop is available in the [video](#) of this activity.

## **Conclusions**

The participants welcomed the initiative of holding this workshop and expressed the need for exchange and collaboration initiatives between the countries on issues of common interest such as the one addressed in this case, i.e. how the context of the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the work of the National DRM/Civil Protection Systems.

Even though the workshop fulfilled the expectation of bringing together the DRM authorities in a high-level exchange of ideas and lessons learned, several of the questions raised during the workshop require further development, which opens up an opportunity to continue working collaboratively within the framework of PROSUR.

## **Annex 1 – Workshop Participants**

### **1) BOLIVIA**

1. Gutnar Oviedo Villanueva, Vice-Ministry of Civil Defense, Ministry of Defense
2. José Luis Gallardo, Vice-Ministry of Foreign Trade and Integration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### **2) BRAZIL**

3. Armin Braun, Director of the National Risk and Disaster Management Center, Ministry of Regional Development
4. Marina Romão, Advisor, International Advisory Office, Ministry of Regional Development

### **3) COLOMBIA**

5. Lina Paola Martínez Fajardo, Coordinator of the International Cooperation Group, National Disaster Risk Management Unit
6. Mr. Faber Mosquera Alvarez, Disaster Management Sub-Directorate, National Disaster Risk Management Unit
7. Miss Maria Jimena Pantoja Castrillón, International Cooperation Group, National Disaster Risk Management Unit
8. Carolina Agudelo Campos, Professional of the Advisory Office on Communications, National Disaster Risk Management Unit
9. Mr. Andrés Leonardo Suárez Galvis, International Cooperation Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### **4) CHILE**

10. Mr. Ricardo Toro, National Director, Office of National Emergency
11. Mr. Cristóbal Mena, National Sub-Director, PROSUR Focal Point, Office of National Emergency
12. Mr. Luis Doñas, International Affairs Liaison Officer, PROSUR Alternate Focal Point, Office of National Emergency
13. Mrs. Natalia Silva, Head of the Civil Protection National System Management Department, Office of National Emergency
14. Mrs. Dafne Nuñez, Professional of the Civil Protection National System Management Department, Office of National Emergency

### **5) ECUADOR**

15. Minister Rommel Ulises Salazar Cedeño, General Director of Risk and Emergency Management, Risk and Emergency Management National Service
16. Fanny Carolina Moreira, Director of Risk Reduction International Strategies, Risk and Emergency Management National Service
17. Mario Estrella, Economist, International Relations Directorate, Ministry of National Defense



18. Colonel Guido Gaona, Delegate of the Joint Command of the Ecuadorean Armed Forces,  
Ministry of National Defense

19. Gabriela Proaño

**6) GUYANA**

20. Captain Salim October

**7) PARAGUAY**

21. Minister Joaquin Roa, National Emergency Secretariat

22. María del Pilar Cantero, Head of the International Relations Directorate, National  
Emergency Secretariat

**8) PERU**

23. Mr. Luis Carranza, Institutional Head of the National Institute of Civil Defense

24. Mr. Juvenal Medina, Institutional Head of the National Center for Disaster Risk Estimation,  
Prevention and Reduction

25. Mrs. Guadalupe Martínez, Presidency of Ministers Council, PROSUR Focal Point

26. Mrs. Blanca Aróstegui, Presidency of Ministers Council, PROSUR Alternate Focal Point

27. Manuel Alvarez, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**9) URUGUAY**

28. Colonel (Retired) Sergio Rico, MA, National Director of the National Emergency System

29. Colonel Antonio Nuñez, Operational Sub-Directorate, National Emergency System

**10) PRESIDENCY POR TEMPORE, CHILE**

30. Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar, Alternate National Coordinator, PROSUR Chile

31. Mr. Francisco Montalva, Support Officer of the Presidency Pro Tempore, Chile

**11) PROSUR NATIONAL COORDINATION, PERU**

32. Mr. David Pedroza, PROSUR Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**12) PROSUR NATIONAL COORDINATION, ECUADOR**

33. Mrs. Diana Velalcázar Rea, National Coordinator of Ecuador before PROSUR, Ministry of  
Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility

**13) IDB-INTAL**

34. Pablo M. García, Director

35. Alejandra Radl, Integration and Trade Specialist

36. Florencia García, Consultant

37. Matías Parimbelli, Consultant

38. Federico Mazzella, Consultant

39. Claudio Osorio, Consultor.

40. Felipe Nogueira, Consultant

## Annex 2 - Photograph



