

INSARAG Americas Regional Chairmanship Group

Chair COLOMBIA:	Mr. Carlos Iván Márquez Pérez, Director General National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD)
I Vice-chair ECUADOR:	Mr. Felipe Bazán Montenegro, Undersecretary general Risk Management Secretariat (SGR)
II Vice-chair EL SALVADOR:	Lic. Walter Osmar Mejía Navarrete, Risk management advisor Ministerio de Gobernación

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MESSAGE

WELCOME REMARKS

Colombia takes on proudly the commitment of representing the Americas region as Regional Chair. In doing so, we have accepted important challenges and responsibilities with the aim to promote the implementation of the updated INSARAG Guidelines, approved by INSARAG in 2015, strengthen the urban search and rescue capacities and create working networks amongst the INSARAG members in the region. For us, it is a pleasure to involve you fully into this important challenge, where we hope to count on the support of all of you, and by doing so, achieve the objectives that we have given us as region.

Carlos Iván Márquez Pérez



Photo: INSARAG Steering Group meeting - 3 Feb 2016 Geneva, credit: Silvia Ballén @UNGRD Colombia

INSARAG REGIONAL CALENDAR Confirmed dates

- ✓ IER USA, Fairfax TF1. 29 April- 1 May, USA
- ✓ SIMEX preparatory workshop, 3-5 May, Bogotá, Colombia
- ✓ Workshop on the proposal to elaborate a revision/ certification process for national USAR team accreditation processes, 7-9 May, Quindío, Colombia
- ✓ INSARAG Team Leaders' meeting, 7-9 Sept, Tokyo, Japan
- ✓ Regional earthquake response exercise – SIMEX, Bogotá, Colombia, 26-30 Sept
- ✓ INSARAG Regional Group meeting, Regional UNDRR/IDAC consultation meeting, 16-18 Sept, Bogotá, Colombia



KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS

In its face-to-face meeting in February, the Regional Chairmanship Group elaborated the [Regional Workplan 2016](#), based on the inputs received by the Regional Group in its meeting in 2015. We encourage you to send your comments and contributions to the Chair and the Secretariat.

As agreed, we will shortly launch the process to update the [Regional assessment of national USAR capacities](#). Colombia will lead the process in 2016, through a questionnaire which will soon be sent to FOCAL POINTS for its completion.

Focal points will also receive an invitation to identify participants with the appropriate profile to the [Workshop on the proposal to elaborate a revision/ certification process for national USAR team accreditation processes](#), hosted by Colombia from 7-9 May in Quindío, Colombia.

Contacts for the purpose of this bulletin:

National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD) - Colombia
www.gestiondelriesgo.gov.co
margarita.arias@gestiondelriesgo.gov.co

INSARAG Secretariat – OCHA Geneva
www.insarag.org
schmachtel@un.org

ACTIVITIES OF RELEVANCE FOR THE REGION

1. In the beginning of February, we participated in the Humanitarian Networks and Partnership Week (www.hnpw.org) which took place in Geneva, and in the framework of which the [INSARAG Steering Group meeting](#) was held, as well as our [regional planning meeting of the Chairmanship Group of the Americas Regional Group](#). The Regional Chairmanship Group presented the document "[How to promote national USAR capacity strengthening based on the INSARAG Guidelines and ensure complementarity of the international response?](#)", based on which the Steering Group asked the region to lead this initiative to design a revision/certification process for national USAR team accreditation processes.

2. As agreed in 2015, the correction of the [Spanish version of the INSARAG Guidelines](#) was completed. They are available on the website.

3. The Regional Chairmanship Group approved the [Format for the documentation of good practices](#). A space was created on www.insarag.org to share these good practices, and two examples are already available: the [National Logistics Center of Colombia](#) (in Spanish) and the [USAR Operational Working Group from Chile](#) (in Spanish). All countries are invited to document relevant good practices, using the proposed template and thereby populate the space on the INSARAG website. The Regional Chairmanship Group will review the document and give the green light for its publication.

4. The Regional Chairmanship Group finalised the [Template on entry requirements for international USAR teams in case of an emergency](#) with the aim of this being completed by the countries of the region and shared on the Virtual OSOCC in cases of emergency. Created in 2014, the template was tested by the countries of the chairmanship group in 2015 and finalised in 2016.

5. On 18 March, the Secretariat sent an invitation to the entire INSARAG community asking for nominations of experts for the [Light Teams Working Group \(LTWG\)](#). Please do not forget the deadline for submitting the nominations: 31 March 2016.

6. Two countries of the Americas region have officially requested the [INSARAG External Classification \(IEC\)](#) of one of their USAR teams respectively: [Colombia](#) and [Chile](#).



Photo: Americas Regional Chairmanship group planning meeting - 5 Feb 2016 Geneva, credit: Silvia Ballén @UNGRD Colombia



Photo: Regional Chairs in the INSARAG Steering Group meeting - 3 Feb 2016 Geneva, credit: Silvia Ballén @UNGRD Colombia

THE REGIONAL GROUP

With the aim to maintain a closer contact with all countries and organizations of the Regional Group, we divided the countries and organisations as follows amongst ourselves:

- **Colombia:** Argentina, Canada, Haiti, Panama, Paraguay, USA
- **Ecuador:** Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Peru, Venezuela
- **El Salvador:** Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico
- **Secretariat/OCHA:** CEPREDENAC, CDEMA, IFRC, PAHO

Members of the Regional Chairmanship Group are creating [Whatsapp groups](#) with the focal points of the countries under their responsibility in order to facilitate information Exchange.

We take this opportunity to send you the list of INSARAG Focal points of the INSARAG Regional Group, with the kind request to contact the Secretariat should there be any updates in the contact details.

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