

## GLOBAL INITIATIVE ON DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT (GIDRM) STRENGTHENING MULTI-RISK APPROACHES IN COLOMBIA

Extreme natural events, slow-onset events such as droughts and sea-level rise, and technological or man-made hazards often have disastrous impacts if the resilience of people and infrastructure is not sufficiently strengthened. As urbanization continues apace, coupled with inadequate health care, environmental degradation, fragile statehood and violent conflicts, disaster risks become more acute, complex and increasingly interdependent. Climate change amplifies these factors.

Disaster risk management (DRM) is a cross-sectoral issue. Disasters have impacts on a variety of areas such as public health, economy, governance, tourism, critical infrastructure (e.g. hospitals, transport, water, communication) and can have devastating effects in already fragile contexts. The **COVID-19 pandemic** illustrates the vulnerabilities and interdependencies of all socio-political and economic areas and sectors worldwide. The pandemic has pushed many health systems to their limits, and the rapid spread of the virus has also created immense economic and socio-political burden in almost all sectors and areas of society. Increasing interdependencies and complex hazards and risks confront us with the challenge of finding new and more resilient approaches to reduce the risk of critical infrastructures failure.

Despite an increasing understanding of the complexity of risks, these are not always adequately considered in development planning and programming. A lack of ability to understand and manage systemic risks jeopardizes the achievement of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) and the Sustainable Development Goals. **Disasters suddenly wipe out many years of development successes and reduce the development opportunities of countries.**



### OUR GOAL WORLDWIDE:

#### PROMOTING RISK-INFORMED DEVELOPMENT

GIDRM aims at strengthening the capacities and skills of decision-makers in the Asia, Southern Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) **to address complex and systemic risks by applying the guiding principle of risk-informed development (RID)** in key sectors. RID describes an understanding of development that considers multi-faceted, dynamic, transnational, simultaneous, inter-dependent and systemic risks. Risk-informed development is a continuous process of addressing complexity – and never neglecting it.

### OUR GOAL IN COLOMBIA:

#### FOSTERING RID IN A MULTI-HAZARD ENVIRONMENT

In Colombia, similar to most countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, 88% of all the disasters that have occurred over the past thirty years are weather-related events. However, losses and damages do not only depend on the intensity or frequency of the events, but mostly on the exposure, vulnerability, and coping capacities of individuals, infrastructure, and systems in face of hazards. Risks derive from the interaction of hazards, exposure, vulnerability, and coping capacity—hence, risks can in- or decrease because of changes in one of these factors.

Why is Colombia a highly vulnerable country?<sup>1</sup>

- 13% of the population are **exposed** to floods, flash floods, landslides, droughts, and other hydrometeorological hazards and **lack the necessary coping capacities due to adverse socio-economic conditions**. Failure to adapt to climate change and reduce risk conditions implies a loss of 0.5% of annual Colombian GDP. The poverty rate increased by 6.5 percentage points from 36% in 2015 to 42.5% in 2020, due to the strong fiscal and economic pressures caused by COVID-19, the highest figure in the last decade. However, although this figure decreased to 39.3 per cent in 2021, thanks to the measures implemented for the post-pandemic recovery, major challenges remain to achieve a further decline in this indicator. The socio-economic condition is especially strained in the municipalities with a **prevalence of violence and conflict**. Disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic impact especially already fragile and vulnerable contexts;
- Colombia is facing an unprecedented migratory movement, mainly due to the economic, political, and social crisis in Venezuela. In the last five years, around two million migrants and refugees arrived and settled mainly in already fragile and vulnerable scenarios adding to the **complexity of the risk conditions in Colombia**;
- 39% of the primary roads are highly exposed to hydrometeorological hazards;
- 47 municipalities in Colombia are threatened by coastal erosion;
- 70% of the country's electricity generation is highly vulnerable to climate variability.



Although Colombia has established a solid institutional and regulatory platform for disaster risk management and climate change adaptation, which is considered a model in Latin America, efforts to promote risk-informed development need to be strengthened to understand and reduce complex risks and safeguard development achievements in the long-term.

### GIDRM'S EFFORTS IN COLOMBIA

GIDRM identified opportunities to strengthen capacities and skills of key actors in risk-informed decision-making while considering context-specific fragility factors: (a) supporting the responsible entities in completing the commitments set out in the National Development Plan (PND) 2018-2022, and (b) by promoting an innovative approach to develop a comprehensive understanding of risks in the upcoming planning instrument (2022-2026) and to strengthen risk-informed development. These efforts will also feed into the current updating of instruments by the different governing bodies of DRM and CCA.

GIDRM focuses on five main areas of intervention, namely, (1) systemic risks in development planning processes and public investments, (2) conditions of fragility and vulnerability in the context of systemic risk (3) capacity building in risk-informed-development (4) links between gender, risk management, climate change in sectoral public policies and migratory phenomena, and (5) resilient disaster recovery adapted to climate change.

To this end, GIDRM has planned the following measures:

- Guiding the implementation of the "Technical Guide on Comprehensive Risk Assessment and Planning in the Context of Climate Change" in Colombia, including a feasibility study to identify needs and a series of recommendations for stakeholders;
- Analysis of the relationship between the migratory dynamics of the migrant population from Venezuela and the configuration of risk scenarios in the face of natural, socio-natural and human-made hazards in the urban area of Bogotá.

<sup>1</sup> Sources: DNP-DADS, 2018; MinTransporte e INVIAS (2015), MinAmbiente, Min Transporte e Invemar (2017), UPME, ACON, OPTIM (2013)

- Capacity building of decision-makers and selected subnational entities for the implementation of risk-informed development;
- Mainstreaming gender, DRM and climate change adaptation in sectoral public policies;
- Fostering disaster resilient and climate change adapted recovery.

### OUR PARTNERS IN COLOMBIA

GIDRM efforts mirror the national structure for DRM, CCA and development planning, as all three approaches are mainstreamed on different levels by different actors. Every institutional platform has its own legal framework with corresponding plans to implement DRM and CCA measures in different sectors and levels. GIDRM cooperates with:

- National DRM System (SNGRD),
- National CCA System (SISCLIMA),
- National Planning System (SNP) / Investment and Public Finance System (SNIP),
- Academic sector (Instituto Pensar, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana) and regional networks (Red SNIP),
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other multilateral agencies.
- Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD) y otros organismos multilaterales.



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