Central America Small Valleys Flood Alert and Vulnerability Reduction Program (SVP): Regional Platform Development

Participating countries: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panamá and Dominican Republic

Base Document

First National Workshop on Early Warning Flood Systems

Belmopan, Belize
May 29, 2009

Background

The experience of the Small Watershed Program (SVP, OEA / DDS 1995-2001) notes the need to implement Early Warning Systems (EWS) to Flood operated by communities, promoting the involvement of all members of the community since the early stages of vulnerability assessment, risk identification, observation and monitoring of hydrometeorological phenomena, contingency preparedness, communication and notification of the alert and response-deployment contingency plan. In a region dominated by "flash floods", characterized by time concentration and short floods, it requires practical systems, low cost and technology, capable of integrating data and information to the prediction of time generated by remote sensor systems for example Radar and satellite systems for ground observation, with observation and monitoring systems on the ground so as to provide a timely alert and response.

In this context, the Department of Sustainable Development of the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS / DSD) with the support of the Global Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning of Nations (UN / PGPAT) and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction United Nations (UN / ISDR), and with funding from the Government of Germany, running in the eight member countries of SICA, the Central America Small Valleys Flood Alert and Vulnerability Reduction Program (SVP): Regional Platform Development.

The program incorporates the experiences and systems developed during the early stages of SVP with financial support from ECHO and the governments of Ireland, Turkey and the Netherlands between 1995 and 2001, seeks to develop a regional platform based on a network of organizations, leaders and community advocates, and a directory of experts and policy makers to a wider dissemination and replication and for the long-term sustainability of the program, reaching the most vulnerable communities in the Isthmus.

The Regional Platform will establish forums for communication and exchange of experiences among organizations that are promoting EWS's in the area and provide technical assistance and the search for common problems that the development of the EWS's are facing in the region.
The Regional Program is being implemented in three phases:

**Phase I**, November 2008-February 2009, was geared to the planning of major actions to be developed. This included visits to each participating country, with the aim of presenting the Regional Program to government institutions which will implement actions in the territory, identifying the official who will act as a national focal point, identify communities in which they could install EWS's, and identify NGOs working on this issue. During this phase was the first meeting of the Regional Steering Committee, which took place on February 19 in Managua, Nicaragua, with the assistance of representatives of the participating government institutions, donor organizations, and organizations that are involved in this issue at the regional level.

**Phase II**, March 2009-December 2009, is dedicated to the implementation of EWS's and the construction of the Regional Platform. It seeks to hire a hydrologist in each country that would support the management of the different organizations, governmental or nongovernmental, that are working on the subject of EWS's. It is also expected to design, install and operate two to four EWS's in each country, giving priority to strengthen the efforts that other organizations are doing.

**Phase III**, January 2010-July 2010, is designed to assess the lessons learned in each country, strengthening the actions taken to improve those activities that require knowledge of the demands of each country on this issue and manage a new phase of this Regional needs previously identified and agreed with each country. This phase is dedicated to the integration of more organizations to the Regional Platform and the pursuit of sustainability.

An important activity within this Regional Program is the implementation in each participating country, the First National Workshop on Early Warning Flood Systems, which will be developed according to the following schedule:

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<th>GRUPO I</th>
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<th>GRUPO II</th>
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<td>Dominican Republic</td>
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Objectives of the National Workshop

**Overall Objective:**
Establish the basis for the development of the Regional Platform for Early Warning Flood Systems.

**Specific Objectives:**
- Make known the scope of the Central America Small Valleys Flood Alert and Vulnerability Reduction Program (SVP): Regional Platform Development;
- To learn about the experiences in each country in the field of Early Warning Flood systems;
- Identify the organizations in each country that are currently working on EWS's;
- Establish a space and forms for exchange of experiences;
- Generate spaces for the Exchange of technical cooperation;
- Identify needs for technical assistance to organizations that are working on EWS's.

**Methodology**
With the support of National Focal Points of the Regional Program, organizations working in each country's EWS's will be identified and will be invited to participate in this national workshop.

There will be an initial presentation by the Central America Small Valleys Flood Alert and Vulnerability Reduction Program (SVP): Regional Platform Development., detailing the actions to be implemented in the country and existing tools for sharing experiences at a regional level (Virtual Forum for Best Practices on Risks and Extreme Hydrological Events: Early Warning and Resilience to Flooding capacity).

Each organization participating in the National Workshop will present their experiences in the country on matters related to Early Warning Flood Systems. These presentations will be made in power point format, with the contents specified in Annex I of this document. Each presenter will have 20 minutes to present. After each presentation there will be a period of 10 minutes for questions and answers about the topic discussed.

There will be a period for group work to discuss the strengths and limitations of the EWS's in the country (financial, methodological, legal, etc.).

A report of the workshop will be developed and a copy shall be sent to each participant present at the event.

**Discussion and Supporting Documents**
- Executive Summary Project Document;
- Format for Power Point Presentation; and
- Documents of EWS's that are being implemented in the country.