



## Organization of American States

**Press Release**

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### **INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS AND AUTHORITIES WILL MEET IN PANAMA TO DISCUSS DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT**

On March 17<sup>th</sup> 2009, high-level authorities from the Inter-American and UN Systems will discuss in Panama ways to further advance the agenda of Disaster Risk Reduction and Development. This 1<sup>st</sup> Session of the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas is being co-organized by the Organization of American States (OAS), and the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) with the financial support of the Government of Canada.

Ambassador Albert Ramdin, OAS Assistant Secretary General, will deliver the keynote speech in which he will promote advancing disaster risk reduction as an integral component of development policy and planning. The OAS has been at the vanguard of disaster risk reduction, with its 34 member States having understood for two decades that disaster reduction is not an issue of a few, but of all sectors and levels of government, as well as the civil society as a whole.

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009, at a workshop convened by Ambassador Ramdin at OAS headquarters in Washington, DC, he highlighted the OAS leading role, by explaining that “the Inter-American Strategic Plan for Policy on Vulnerability Reduction, Risk Management and Disaster Response (IASP), adopted in 2003, epitomizes the political will to prevent, and mitigate the consequences and implications of natural phenomena.”

This First Session of the Regional Platform is taking place almost two years after the First Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and just months before its second session. The Regional Platform of the Americas is expected to become the main regional forum for all parties involved in disaster risk reduction, including regional inter-governmental bodies, civil society, United Nations specialized agencies, international financial institutions, the private sector, and the scientific and academic communities.

More than 200 participants, including government officials, scientists, academics, representatives of multilateral organizations, and members of civil society organized groups are expected to attend this first Session.

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