

DEAR INSARAG FOCAL POINTS IN THE AMERICAS REGION

Please accept a warm greeting from the National Disaster Risk Management Unit – UNGRD Colombia and the INSARAG Americas Regional Chairmanship of 2016.

I take this opportunity to write to you in the context of the commitment I have taken on as Regional Chair to improve the knowledge on the capacities and requirements of the national USAR systems in the region, through the Regional Assessment of National USAR Team Capacities. This process of taken on by Colombia in our capacity as Regional Chair for 2016, adapting the questionnaire to an excel formal and adding a section on the operational capacity of USAR teams in order to obtain a more complete inventory.

The Regional Assessment of National USAR Team Capacities was updated and divided into two questionnaires with the aim to separate the questions which are to be answered by focal points and those that are to be answered by the USAR teams.

The assessment has two main purposes:

- i. Give you as focal points and your USAR teams a tool by which you can analyze the current status of the USAR team capacities in your country, and
- ii. Assess the tendencies with regard to USAR team capacity in the Americas region with the aim of obtaining an up to date basis for the planning of activities of the Regional Group

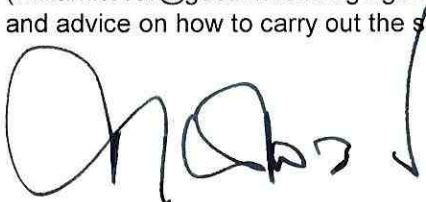
In addition, it is also planned to use the information received from you to update the INSARAG directory.

As informed previously on various occasions, the progress with the assessment stands at 50% with inputs from 11 countries (Colombia, Panama, Mexico, Ecuador, Venezuela, USA, Argentina, Costa Rica, Honduras, Dominican Republic, and Peru).

In this context, I kindly urge countries of the region who have not yet done so to complete the assessment before 31 March 2017, using this process to advocate for strong national ownership of national capacity strengthening process and the coordination of donor support, in line with the national priorities.

For the National Disaster Risk Management System of Colombia, through the National Disaster Risk Management Unit and in the framework of the INSARAG Americas Regional Chairmanship, it is an honor to contribute to the knowledge and capacity strengthening of the region, hoping for an immediate implementation in order to comply with the humanitarian mission of "Saving Lives".

Arq. William Alfonso Tovar, INSARAG Operational Focal Point of Colombia (william.tovar@gestiondelriesgo.gov.co, + 573108777025) is at your disposal to provide support and advice on how to carry out the survey throughout the process.



CARLOS IVÁN MÁRQUEZ PÉREZ

General Director

INSARAG Americas Regional Chair

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