



INSARAG Americas Regional Chairmanship Group

Chair ECUADOR:	Mayor (B) Jorge Martínez Loaiza, Undersecretary for Preparedness and Response in the Risk Management Secretariat
I Vice-Chair MEXICO:	Lic. Ricardo de la Cruz Musalem, General Director of Civil Protection, Ministry of the Interior
II Vice-Chair ARGENTINA:	Ambassador Alejandro Daneri, President of the White Helmets Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

News Bulletin, 2017/ 01

MESSAGE

WELCOME REMARKS

For Ecuador, taking on the INSARAG Regional Chair for the Americas is a challenge that entails important responsibilities, for example continuing with the implementation and dissemination of the INSARAG Guidelines 2015 at the local and regional levels; encouraging other countries of the region to strengthen their local capacities and promoting collaboration among INSARAG member countries and organizations.

We reaffirm our commitment to promote the goals we have set as a region and hope we can count on your support to achieve this mission.

An important step was achieved during the last month of February: the proposal on the [INSARAG external support and recognition process for national USAR team accreditation processes](#) was approved by the INSARAG Steering Group. Our challenge at the regional level will be the implementation of the process as outlined in our work plan.

Mayor (B) Jorge Martínez Loaiza



INSARAG Steering Group meeting, 9.02.2017, Geneva



KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. During its face-to-face meeting of 10 February, the Regional Chairmanship Group elaborated the [Regional Work Plan 2017](#), based on the input received from the Regional Group at its meeting in 2016. **We expect to receive comments from countries through their focal points, latest by 31 March.**
2. Colombia ratified its commitment to continue supporting the development of the **Regional Assessment of National USAR Capacities**. All countries are requested to provide the information to Colombia with a copy to the Secretariat no later than 31 March 2017. For additional guidance, please contact Arq. William Tovar, William.tovar@gestiondelriesgo.gov.co, +57 310 8777025.
3. In order to implement the INSARAG external support and recognition process (IESRP) for national USAR accreditation processes, **the Secretariat will shortly be calling on experts to become part of the Technical Support Group**, as laid out in the proposal. The Regional Chairmanship Group will review the nominations and approve the candidates who should participate in the workshop that Chile has offered to host.

INSARAG REGIONAL CALENDAR

- ✓ 3-7 April 2017: USAR Coordination Course, Fairfax – Virginia, EEUU.
- ✓ 13-17 November 2017: INSARAG External Classification (IEC) Chile, USAR Bomberos de Chile.
- ✓ 29 Nov-1Dec: INSARAG Regional Group meeting and UNDAC Regional consultation meeting, Guayaquil, Ecuador.

To be confirmed:

- ✓ (To be confirmed - June): Workshop for the Technical Support Group on the National Accreditation Process, Santiago, Chile
- ✓ (To be confirmed – June): OSOCC operations course, Costa Rica
- ✓ Workshop for excon and planning staff on the INSARAG SIMEX methodology
- ✓ Second USAR coordination course

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ACTIVITIES OF RELEVANCE FOR THE REGION

1. During the second week of February, the Humanitarian Networks and Partnership Week (<https://www.hnpw.org>) was held in Geneva, Switzerland. As part of this meeting, the [INSARAG Steering Group meeting](#) was held as well as the planning meeting of the INSARAG Americas Regional Chairmanship Group. The key points to highlight are:

- The approval of the Regional Proposal that was developed on the [external support and recognition process for national USAR team accreditation processes](#) as well as the guidance on the [national accreditation process](#) itself, and with it the green light to continue its implementation and consolidation.
- The approval about the definition, operations and tactical concept of the “international light teams”, which was developed by the Working Group and consulted with the regions. Nevertheless, the Steering Group decided that further discussions are needed on the recognition process and possible links to the national accreditation process.
- See [Chairman Summary, 2017](#)

In this context, the Regional Chairmanship Group will reflect the position of the Region regarding the recognition of “international light teams”. In case there are concerns or comments around it, please contact Mr. Martin Gómez Lissarrague, Argentina, Member of the Light Teams Working Group on behalf of the Americas Region, mglissarrague@gmail.com

2. After the earthquakes that took place worldwide, it was important to highlight the lessons identified by them, both for the countries that receive aid and for those who offer it, in the form of search and rescue teams. In addition, this was a key moment to highlight the importance of strengthening local capacities. The INSARAG Steering Group approved the [INSARAG Strategy 2017-2020](#) with an emphasis on the slogan of the meeting “*As national as possible, international as necessary*”.
3. Ecuador will hold from **the National USAR Accreditation Exercise** from 13-15 April 2017, highlighting the importance of strengthening the USAR capacities of the national response teams.
4. Mexico will host the **Fifth Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction** to be held on 22-26 May 2017 in Cancun, Quintana Roo.
5. This year, there will be no Regional Earthquake Response Exercise - Regional SIMEX. However, countries are encouraged to use the SIMEX methodology to replicate it at the national level and it is being considered instead to organize a training workshop and exchange of experiences on the SIMEX methodology for the planning and control personnel (EXCON). The Chairmanship Group and the Secretariat will be informing about it.



REGIONAL GROUP

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

- **Ecuador:** Peru, Colombia, Chile, Bolivia, Canada, USA
- **Mexico:** Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panamá, Cuba.
- **Argentina:** Paraguay, Brazil, Venezuela, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Antigua & Barbuda, French Antilles
- **Secretariat /OCHA:** CDEMA, CEPREDENAC, PAHO, IFRC.

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 also take this opportunity to remind focal points of their responsibility to have an account to access the Virtual OSOCC <https://vosocc.unocha.org> mainly for real-time information exchange in cases of emergencies.

We take this opportunity also to send you the list of INSARAG Focal points of the INSARAG Regional Group, with the kind request to contact the Secretariat if there is any update in the contact details.

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