



**Dominican Republic
Ministry of Defense**



14th Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas

Final Act of the Ad-Hoc Working Group: Cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR); Cooperation and Coordination in Search and Rescue operations; as well as Experience and Good Practice Sharing on the Participation of the Defense and Security Forces Regarding Environmental Protection and Climate Resilience.

In the City of Santo Domingo, capital of the Dominican Republic, at eight thirty in the morning on April 24th of the year two thousand nineteen (2019), in the framework of the 2019-2020 Cycle of the "14th Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas", which is chaired by the Ministry of Defense of Chile through a Pro Tempore Secretariat, began the work of the Ad-Hoc Working Group "Cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance and Relief (HA/DR); Cooperation and Coordination in Search and Rescue Operations; as well as Experience and Good Practice Sharing on the Participation of Defense and Security Forces Regarding Environmental Protection and Climate Resilience", taking place from the 23rd to the 26th of April of the year two thousand nineteen (2019), meeting held in the Dominican Fiesta Hotel of the city of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

This document has been drafted, in order to have a record of the activities developed during the event:

I. Background.

- A. The Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas, subsequently referred to as CMDA, is a biennial multilateral policy meeting of international character, consisting and directed by the Ministers of Defense of the Americas, with the permission of the governments of their respective countries. It is the main meeting instance of the defense sector in the hemisphere and in accordance with article 2 of its rules of procedure, has the fundamental purpose of promoting mutual knowledge, analysis, discussion and exchange of ideas and experiences in defense and security.
- B. During the XIII CMDA, held in the city of Cancun, Mexico, in October 2018, Ministers agreed in the "Cancun Declaration" that during the 2019-2020 cycle of the conference Ad-Hoc groups in different member countries would be created, in order to address issues of hemispheric interest related to:
 - a. "Cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR)" and "Cooperation and Coordination in Search and Rescue Operations (SAR)"; as well as to share experiences and best practices on the participation of Defense and Security Forces regarding environmental protection and climate resilience;

- b. The creation of a Working Group to continue conversations regarding the Evolution of the Role of the Armed Forces in defense and security matters and that includes cybersecurity as a tool for the defense and security of the hemisphere;
 - c. Giving continuity to the Ad-Hoc Working Group on mainstreaming Gender Perspective as a crosscutting concept in defense and security policies in the hemisphere, with the purpose of achieving gender equality and the elimination of any form of gender-based discrimination in the defense and security forces;
- C. To attain the goals proposed, the objective of the Ad-Hoc Group was established as follows:
- To create a space for dialog, for the exchange of experiences of the Defense and Security Forces of the hemisphere, in the topics raised.
- D. It's paramount highlighting that the general principles of the CMDA were taken into account to guide the operation and activities of the work developed in this Ad Hoc Group, as described in article 3 of its rules of procedure:
- a. Scope of action.
 - b. Flexibility in participation.
 - c. Acceptance of diversity.
 - d. Abstention from seeking the creation of doctrines.
 - e. Permanent interaction.
 - f. Projection.
 - g. Increase of bilateral contact.

II. Participating Delegations:

A. Representatives of the Pro Tempore Secretariat:

- 1. George Brown, Executive Secretary of the 14th Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas.
- 2. Andres Villar, Coordinator of the 14th Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas, 2019-2020.

B. Ministry of Defense of the Dominican Republic:

- 1. Colonel Frank Mauricio Cabrera Rizek, Army of the Dominican Republic (ERD), Coordinator of the Working Group;
- 2. Colonel Ysidro Lopez Aquino, ERD, Moderator of the "Cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR)" section.

3. Pilot Colonel Karim Hernández Seijos, Air Force of the Dominican Republic (FARD), Moderator of "Cooperation and Coordination in Search and Rescue Operations (SAR)".
4. Frigate Captain (Colonel) Hugo Goicoechea Franco, Navy of the Dominican Republic (ARD), Moderator of "Sharing Experiences and Good Practices on the Participation of the Defense and Security Forces Regarding Environmental Protection and Climate Resilience".

C. Delegations of the Countries:

- a) Nora Elizabeth Capello, Ambassador of Argentina to the Dominican Republic, Argentina.
- b) Commander Raymond King, Port Controller, Ph.D, Dr. Jennifer Bethel, Director of Research Development, Ministry of National Security, The Bahamas.
- c) Major Junior Browne, G-5, Captain Adrian Deane G-3, Barbados.
- d) Major Eric Neal, Masters Degree, Inspector General, Ministry of National Security, Belize.
- e) Captain of Sea and War **Ciro de Oliveira Barbosa, Section Head Inter-American Bodies, Colonel Mauro Ido, Defense Bodies Section Coordinator, Paulo Cezar Garcia Brandão Brazil.**
- f) **Tracy Brûlé, Section Head, Latin America & Caribbean, Department of National Defence of Canada; LCol Paul Simpson, J5 HADR, Canadian Joint Ops Command.**
- g) Daniela Belén Sepúlveda Soto, Department Coordinator for South & Central America and the Caribbean, Sub-Secretary of Defense, George Brown Mc Lean, XIV CDMA Executive Secretary, Sergio Larrain Analyst/Military Coordination in Disasters, Andrés Villar, XIV CDMA Coordinator, Chile.
- h) Navy Captain, Juan Gabriel Rozo , Naval, Military, and Air Attaché of Colombia in the Dominican Republic, Colombia
- i) Ximena del Consuelo Jacome Guayasamin, Second Secretary, Embassy of Ecuador in the Dominican Republic, Delegate of the Ministry of Defense of Ecuador
- j) **Kidd Manville, Office of the Secretary of Defense; Colonel José F. Melgarejo, United States Southern Command.**
- k) Salvador Amilcar Mejía, Jefe del C-V “Civilian Affairs”, El Salvador.
- l) Ariel Mazarriegos Barrios, Disaster Mitigation Reduction, Ministry of Defense, Guatemala.
- m) Colonel Denzil Carmicheal, Commander Infantry Battalion, Guyana.
- n) Joseph Andre Gracien Jean, Strategic Planning and Research Director, Luis-Emile Leveque, Head of Service Foreign Cooperation Office, Haiti.
- o) Colonel Norman Ayax Maldonado, Head of Civil Protection Section, Secretariat of National Defense, Mexico
- p) Inf. Colonel Juan José Montiel Maldonado, Head of Civil Protection of the Secretariat of National Defense, México.
- q) Major Oriel Iván Reyes Herrera, Second Lieutenant Elieser Uribiades Castillo Gutiérrez, Panama.

- r) Colonel Nery Torres Laconich, Director of International Affairs and Cooperation of the Ministry of Defense, Colonel Ricardo Nelido Jara Castillo, Director General of Policy and Strategy of the National Ministry of Defense, Paraguay.
- s) Beatriz Zoila Acosta Silva, International Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance Specialist, Peru.
- t) Colonel Frank Mauricio Cabrera Rizek, DR Army, Defense Ministry Delegate to the CMDA, Dominican Republic.
- u) Álvaro Daniel Gallardo Castro, Ambassador of Uruguay to the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Gerardo Librandi Outeda, Advisor to the Embassy of Uruguay in the Dom. Rep.
- v) Colonel Kester Weekes, Director Force Development and Transformation, Lieutenant Commander Aldon Jasper, Acting Executive Officer, Trinidad & Tobago Coast Guard.
- w) Colonel Darren D. Lynn, Director of the Under Secretariat of Advisory Services, Colonel Francisco I. Pérez González, Hemispheric Situation Sec. Advisor, Colonel Edgar Araujo Flores, Head of Information Management and Analysis Division, IBD.
- x) General Luis Fco. De León Rodríguez, Secretary General of the Conference of American Armies, CEA.
- y) Colonel Pilot Mario Rivas, Assistant Secretary General, SICOFAA
- z) Fabiana Perera, Assistant Research Fellow, Centro Perry.

III. Event Details:

- A. **Opening Ceremony.** The opening ceremony was held in the Regency Conference Hall of the hotel hosting the event. Seated at the presiding table were Major General Braulio Alcántara López, ERD (DR Army), Vice-Minister of Defense for Military Affairs, chair, George Brown and Andrés Villar, Executive Secretary and Coordinator of the 14th Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas respectively, and Colonel Frank Mauricio Cabrera Rizek, Working Group Coordinator.
- B. Upon welcoming the participants, Colonel Frank Mauricio Cabrera Rizek, Working Group Coordinator, gave the floor to George Brown, Executive Secretary of the 14th Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas.
- C. Major General Braulio Alcántara López, DR Army, Vice-Minister of Defense for Military Affairs, officially launched the works of the Ad-Hoc Group.
- D. **Group Photo:**
- E. **Information Session.** In order to present an overview of the issues to be addressed during the Ad Hoc Group, the following conferences were introduced:
 - 1. Participants in this Working Group met during the day on April 24th to explore the topic of "Cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR)".
 - 2. Participants in this Working Group met during the morning of April 25th, to explore the subject of "Cooperation and Coordination in Search and Rescue Operations";

3. Participants in this Working Group met during the afternoon of April 25th, to explore the subject "Sharing Experience and Good Practices on the Participation of the Defense and Security Forces Regarding Environmental Protection and Climate Resilience."

The topics covered in each group as well as contributions made by the delegations have been recorded in the **ANNEXED MINUTES**.

F. Conclusions and Recommendations.

Working Group One:

Cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR).

Conclusions

- a) During the development of the "Cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief" topic, valuable contributions were presented by the different delegations.
- b) Exchanging information on the available capacities is a key element of an effective cooperation, through gaining knowledge on the affected country's needs and priorities.
- c) Upon intensive discussions amongst the participants, the member states present reached an agreement and approved the Disaster Cooperation Mechanism of Countries of the Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas (MECODE-CMDA), including the change of name (ex MECOECA).¹
- d) The Executive Secretariat of the 14th CMDA will submit the approved text to CMDA member states.
- e) The Executive Secretariat of the 14th CMDA and the IDB will be working together in the organization of the Desk Exercise, which will be carried out in the premises of the IDB one day prior to the development of the Ad Hoc Working Group on "Evolution of the Role of the Armed Forces in Defense and Security," in November 2019.

IV. Recommendations

- a. Submit the MECODE for approval in the next Preparatory Meeting of the 14th CMDA, during the month of May 2020, in Santiago de Chile.
- b. Inform the OAS that MECODE implementation might require providing resources for the IDB.

¹ Uruguay expressed that it will advise the Pro-Tempore Secretariat of the XIV CMDA whether it approves or not the MECODE document.

- c. Remind CMDA member states to provide the Pro Tempore Secretariat with information regarding memoranda of understanding, cooperation agreements, and other legal instruments on humanitarian assistance and relief in connection to current disasters within the hemisphere.
- d. Maintain Cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR) as an ongoing subject of discussion in the CMDA through this Working Group, as per paragraph No. 13 of the 2018 Cancun Statement.
- e. It was determined that the Defense Ministries of each member State need to undertake administrative steps with their respective Foreign Relations Ministries in order to instruct their Ambassadors in the Organization of American States to request the contribution of a larger budget for the Inter-American Defense Board, as per paragraph 6 of the Cancun Statement, of the 13th Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas.²
- f. Within the internal scope of each member State, it was considered that Defense Ministries should take internal action with other Ministries in order to facilitate the processing of humanitarian assistance requests, as well as to expedite diplomatic and material responses to the country requesting assistance

Working Group Two:

Cooperation and Coordination in Search and Rescue Operations.

Conclusions:

- 1. The decision was made to continue strengthening the diffusion and integration of Search and Rescue (SAR) topics within the doctrine, training, equipping and operational procedures of the armed forces and/or law enforcement agencies, as per national legislation and international documents signed and/or ratified by each State on the matter.
- 2. Interest was expressed in adopting measures that allow for strengthening the level of cooperation related to Search and Rescue (SAR) capacities and regional rescue, conducted by each country's competent authorities, for the preservation of life and humanitarian aid in the case of potential accidents and disasters, upon the request of countries.
- 3. The relevance was determined of inviting countries attending the Conference of the Defense Ministers of the Americas (CMDA) to provide the Pro Tempore Secretariat with information on memoranda of understanding and agreement, as well as on other legal instruments of Search and Rescue (SAR) cooperation that exist in the hemisphere.

² The delegation of Uruguay does not concur with the Working Group's proposal as regards this paragraph.

4. Search and Rescue (SAR) was acknowledged as an information flow (compilation) mode that is to be kept up to date on a permanent basis.
5. Search and Rescue (SAR) was considered within the framework of the Cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR) working group.

Recommendations:

1. Recommend the ratification of all existing international agreements that allow for the strengthening of search and rescue cooperation levels, by all member states of the CMDA that have not yet done so.
2. Gather all inputs/contributions from Specialized Conferences on Search and Rescue efforts for sharing in CMDA events.
3. It is encouraged that member countries continue to provide the Pro-Tempore Secretariat input into the SAR compendium and, if required, that IADB present a status update during the Preparatory Meeting of each CMDA cycle.

Working Group Three:

Sharing Experiences and Good Practices on the participation of the Defense and Security Forces regarding Environmental Protection and Climate Resilience.

I. Conclusions

1. As all CDMA members are aware, global warming/climate change is affecting each one of the States of this hemisphere, including their security and defense forces, their staff, facilities and all other assets used to carry out their operations. Therefore, our institutions are promoting efforts to face climate impacts in order to be able to continue operating and fulfill their mission of safeguarding/protecting their respective nations.
2. It is extremely important that the different countries of the hemisphere participate in designing, promoting, and contributing with the creation of policies, strategies, and procedures aimed to the protection of the environment. Likewise, it is relevant to acknowledge common problems that affect the member states of this Conference of Ministers, such as: environmental protection, resilience capacity and adaptation to global warming/climate change. As well, we should especially acknowledge the contributions made by the delegations of Canada, Mexico, Paraguay and Dominican Republic in relation to the issue at hand.

3. The supervision of military facilities has been recognized as highly relevant, facilities which should be renovated and made suitable so they are able to increase their capacity to counteract environmental impact and be increasingly resilient. Likewise, the importance of strengthening military staff with educational and awareness programs related to the protection of natural resources.
4. In virtue of the deterioration of the environment affecting the quality of life of our peoples and constituting a challenge to the security of the States of the hemisphere, it is of vital importance that defense and security forces aim toward increasing the efforts of our States in pursuit of environmental protection and climate resilience.

II. Recommendations

Recognizing that all our member nations share the same hemisphere, and that we are all affected by the consequences of global warming & climate change, and taking into account the different circumstances and capacities of each of our countries, we recommend ministers to consider the following:

1. When building or renovating the facilities and other assets of our defense and security agencies, assess and strengthen practices that take into account the protection of the environment.
2. Define and/or strengthen strategies and processes in order to adapt to climate change impact in the field of defense and security.
3. Analyze any potential environmental effects of operations, exercises, and training during the planning stage.
4. Promote conduct that is committed to saving energy and take environmental sustainability into account in all decision-making processes and activities.
5. Continue supporting the institutions in charge of carrying out environmental protection policies, using the capacities of the Armed Forces to obtain accurate and timely information that may be used in the battle against illegal activities that damage the environment.
6. Implementer the exchange of good environmental practices applicable within the scope of Security and Defense, through specialized training and exchange of knowledge, in

order to build a compilation of good practices on the subject of environmental protection and climate resilience.

7. Within their capabilities and in liaison with the civil society, contribute with reforestation programs for the recovery of green areas affected by logging in natural reserve areas as well as in different areas of responsibility where military operations and exercises are carried out on a regular basis.
8. Contribute with strengthening the legal frameworks related to sanctions against environmental crimes/offences, such as trafficking of species, deforestation, erosion of river sources, groundwater reserves, and all forms of habitat destruction and pollution.
9. Renovate and adapt military infrastructure in order to increase their climactic and environmental resilience capacity.

Thus, at seventeen forty-five hours of April 25th of the year two thousand nineteen, conclude the works of the Ad-Hoc Working Group "Cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR); Cooperation and Coordination in Search and Rescue Operations; as well as Sharing of Experiences and Good Practices on the Participation of the Defense and Security Forces Regarding Environmental Protection and Climate Resilience", with the signing of this act, printed in twenty-one (21) copies in the Spanish, English, French, and Portuguese languages; becoming a working and reference document for member countries and which must be given the treatment explained in Chapters IV "TREATMENT OF DOCUMENTS AND CLASSIFIED MATTERS" and V "DESTRUCTION AND INCINERATION OF DOCUMENTATION" of the rules of procedure of the CMDA.

SIGNATURES

XIV CMDA Secretary General

George Brown Mc Lean

Delegate of Argentina

Nora Elizabeth Capello
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Republic

Delegate of Bahamas

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Major Eric Neal
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Delegate of Honduras

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