

*Time to Pass the Baton*



*Disaster Risk Reduction  
from the Perspective of  
Environmental Management,  
Land Use Management,  
Finance and Public Investment*

**363.34**

**I-61-t**

International Resources Group

Time to pass the baton : disaster risk reduction from the perspective of environmental management, land use management, finance and public investment. -- 1a. ed. -- San José, C.R : Grupo Internacional Recursos del Sur, 2008. 308 p. 20 x 26 cm.

ISBN 978-9968-500-01-2

1<sup>st</sup> English edition: July 2008.

1. Natural disasters. 2. Sustainable development. 3. Environmental management. 4. Land use management. 5. Public investment and finance. 6. Title.

Printed by: Editorama, S.A.



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

This publication was prepared by the International Resources Group (IRG) under the technical and administrative support contract N. HDA-C-00-03-0012600, awarded by the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

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*IN MEMORY OF PAUL C. BELL, JR.*

It is an honor to dedicate this publication to the memory of Paul C. Bell, Jr., a pioneer in the area of disaster risk management. Few people have left such a clear fingerprint not only in the region to which he dedicated his life, the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region, but in other regions worldwide that he influenced, thanks to his enthusiasm, passion, professionalism, and humanitarian character.

Paul began his professional life as a missionary, then continued his work in the U.S. Peace Corps, the Inter-American Foundation, the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Refugee Programs, the U.N. Disaster Relief Office, and finally, he dedicated more than 20 years to the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) as a Senior Regional Advisor based in Costa Rica.

Paul was the driving force behind two particularly important accomplishments for disaster risk management in the region: the LAC region training program implemented in the late 1980s, and the hemispheric conference on disaster risk reduction in 2001, two years before he passed away.

The challenge of reducing risk and responding to disasters persists. How can disaster risk reduction be linked to the response and transition phases of humanitarian work? At the same time, how can we influence key stakeholders in the development arena to embrace risk reduction as a decisive contribution to the sustainability of their valuable endeavors?

I hope this book provides some answers and food for thought as we continue to work together to save lives, alleviate human suffering, and reduce the social and economic impact of disasters.

**Ky Luu**  
Director  
Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance  
United States Agency for International Development

*BLANCA*

## *PROLOGUE*

The U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), part of the Agency's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), has been working continuously in Latin America and the Caribbean for more than 20 years. Its labor in response to emergency situations, as well as its training and technical assistance, has been well received and recognized throughout the region.

Conscious of the scientific and technical advances in matters of risk and disaster generated in recent years, the regional office of USAID/OFDA has decided to move forward on issues of risk management. To date, the program's evolution has produced two landmark accomplishments in this area: (1) the hemispheric December 2001 conference on risk reduction, and (2) the identification, in 2005, of a series of central issues linked to risk reduction that will allow for strategic planning and the establishment of medium and long-range priorities. USAID/OFDA has also backed a variety of initiatives in the field of disaster risk reduction with agencies from the United Nations, the Caribbean Development Bank, and the Organization of American States, to mention a few.

To approach these new challenges in a systematic manner, USAID/OFDA and the International Resources Group (IRG), the company that implements USAID/OFDA's technical assistance program in Latin America and the Caribbean (IRG/OFDALAC program), designed a strategy that would help to explore possible areas for intervention in the near future. Two years have passed, in which IRG/OFDALAC has promoted the integration of "communities of practice" designed to reduce disaster risk in areas such as environmental management, land use management, finances and public investment, and education. These communities of practice identified the need to generate a series of documents that will allow the establishment of state-of-the-art instruments in the various areas, as well as a compilation of the tools and instruments that are available.

It is with great pride and pleasure that USAID/OFDA supports the publication of the works of distinguished and recognized experts in critical areas of the development of countries throughout the region. We hope that this document becomes a reference tool for universities, professional groups, public offices, cooperation organizations, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as independent professionals.

**Tim Callaghan**

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