



ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CERAM-ECUADOR International Seminar on Risk Management and Sustainable Development

Concept Note

Date

June 21-24, 2021

Venue

Considering the health crisis affecting Ecuador and the world, the Seminar will be implemented Virtually, utilizing well known and reliable platforms

Context and motivation

Extreme natural events (earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, etc.) are part of the planet's life and, therefore, we need to learn to live with them. Lack of proper disaster risk management (DRM), however, results in unacceptably high levels of impact that have long-lasting effects and cause significant disruption of the countries' development processes.

Statistics show that most of the negative impact of extreme natural events concentrates in the least developed countries. This is especially true in terms of human impact. In Ecuador, for example, the Manabí earthquake of April 2016 damaged 560 schools, 166 of which had moderate and severe damage and 88 collapsed completely. Fortunately, the earthquake happened when children were not in class and, consequently, thousands of precious lives were saved. It will take many years and very significant resources for the country to have again the schools that already existed before the earthquake. Instead of progressing, the country went backwards in its development. But this was not limited to schools. Many hospitals, houses, commercial and industrial buildings, lifelines were also damaged or lost. All of this may be reconstructed, at a very high cost and with huge opportunity loss (using resources to build again what was already there instead of investing in development) but, of course, the lives lost during the event will never be recovered.

Given the fast growth of exposed population, property, infrastructure and economy due to regular demographic growth, urbanization processes and other socioeconomic factors, it is absolutely necessary to protect not only people's lives but also the development processes of the nations. Additional effects caused by climate change makes it even more urgent the development and implementation of long-term strategies to reduce the potential impact (risk) of increasingly severe and frequent extreme events.



DRM strategies and actions, however, cannot be developed and implemented in isolation. DRM needs to be an integral part of all development plans and investment programs. A country needs to ensure that heavy investments in housing, critical infrastructure, lifelines, productivity, social development, etc., are not lost in the next earthquake, flood or El Niño.

To develop sustainable and effective solutions for the development of local capacities for risk assessment and management, the Global Risk Identification Programme (GRIP) of the United Nations started in 2009 the establishment of Centers of Excellence for Risk Assessment and Management (CERAM) in high-risk countries. The GRIP was the official platform for the implementation of Priority 2 (risk identification) of the Hyogo Framework for Action, a blueprint for disaster risk reduction that was signed by about 190 countries around the world. Using the CERAM design created by GRIP and the experience of the global network of existing CERAMs, a Center of Excellence for Risk Assessment and Management and Climate Change for Ecuador (CERAM-Ecuador) is being established. The University of the Armed Forces (ESPE) one of the top universities in Ecuador, will host the CERAM-Ecuador.

Working directly with the Government and all sectors of society, the CERAM-Ecuador has the following main functions:

- To function as an Open Platform to develop country-specific practices in disaster risk assessments and its use in policy and decision making;
- To provide technical support and services to other countries in the region and enhance South-South Collaboration in disaster risk assessment and management;
- To promote Capacity Development by facilitating the collaboration between academic institutions and governmental agencies to improve public policy and decision making based on the good understanding of risks and disasters
- To collaborate and interact with other CERAMs, expert groups and implementing partners for the generation of knowledge products and the provision of integrated support to risk assessment and management at all levels

As one of the first activities, and to help the community to understand all the areas to be covered by the CERAM, an International Seminar is being organized with the following thematic sessions:

- Context: the need for risk assessment and management in Ecuador
- Learning from the past to foretell the future
- Assessing disaster risk
- Applications and incorporation of risk into Governance
- Institutionalization and sustainability
- The proposed solution: CERAM

More than 30 experts, practitioners and authorities from more than fifteen countries in four continents have been invited to present examples of important real-life projects and initiatives that have required multidisciplinary approaches and the active engagement and collaboration of many people representing the various sectors of society. All the presented projects/initiatives have had



ESPE
UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS FUERZAS ARMADAS
INNOVACIÓN PARA LA EXCELENCIA



a very significant impact in enhancing disaster resilience at local, national, regional and even global levels.

The themes and presentations included in the Seminar's Program reflect the philosophy guiding the establishment of CERAM-Ecuador, namely, to work as an Open Platform to facilitate the collaborative and coordinated work of all the actors needed to produce effective and practical DRM solutions for the country. The final goal is to save lives and protect the sustainable development of Ecuador.

Target audience

Directly or indirectly, disasters affect all the members of a community. Consequently, everybody benefits from the reduction of the negative impact of natural extreme events. At the same time, everybody has a role in the process of enhancing the society's resilience. With this in mind, the Seminar targets all members and sectors of society, including technical experts and practitioners, decision makers, representatives of all sectors of society, the mass media, community leaders, the international community in Ecuador, etc.

Language

Spanish and English are the official languages for the Seminar.

Information

A dedicated web site has been created to provide all the relevant information. The URL will be provided soon.

Contacts

- Technical content, speakers and presentations: Dr. Carlos Villacís (villacis@hawaii.edu)
- Organization and logistics: Tcrn. Fausto de la Cadena (fmdelacadena1@espe.edu.ec)