

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
Disaster Prevention and Recovery Directorate of the
Disaster Reduction Unit

PROJECT
LESSONS LEARNED IN POST-DISASTER RECOVERY AND
DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE
CARIBBEAN

CASE STUDY: BOLIVIA

(Draft Document)

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I. BACKGROUND

The recurrence of great disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean is unquestionable, the effects of which delay the development of the countries and regions affected quite significantly.

This is why great efforts are being undertaken throughout the Continent in regard to preparations for responding to emergencies and the introduction of risk prevention and mitigation concepts and activities in the region's development processes, even though the latter purpose is at a very early stage in many of these countries.

However, the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean have not concerned themselves with the establishment of State policies or strategies that would lead their people to prepare in advance to face the recovery and development processes that they invariably must face up to after the occurrence of disasters.

This is the reason why governments, with the support of international cooperation, generally improvise speedy and uncoordinated reconstruction programs with a short term vision, which have sustainability problems in the medium and long term and, oftentimes, reproduce or increase the risks that generate such disasters.

In view of this situation, the UNDP Disaster Prevention and Recovery Program has initiated a project towards the solution of this problem.

II. OBJETIVES OF THE PROJECT.

The medium-term objective is the analysis and systematization of the lessons learned in post-disaster recovery and development processes in Latin America and the Caribbean so that, based on this, work instruments may be generated and they may be useful to the governments and to international cooperation, the purpose being of taking full advantage of the opportunities offered by such situations, if a long-term work vision and the concepts of risk reduction and sustainable development are adopted.

The Project's short-term objective, which is being developed at present, is to make an approximation to the analysis of this type of experience in three countries of the Andean region, with the purpose of formulating a first proposal of strategic lines to orient the decision of the UNDP and the Agencies of the United Nations System on what path to follow in the future in this field.

III. METHODOLOGY OF THE PROJECT.

As part of the process that has been initiated, the Disaster Prevention and Recovery Directorate of the UNPD has prepared a document entitled "Preliminary Guidelines for Post-Disaster Recovery".

In the general context of this document, workshops were conducted in Colombia, Bolivia and Venezuela, with the purpose of spawning reflection on this theme. Public servants from the national and local governments, NGOs and several UN agencies and private consultants participated in each one of these workshops. Complementarily, an analysis was made in the three countries, based on the existing documents; it dealt with the manner in which the recovery processes subsequent to two of the three disaster situations that took place in the last few years were handled.

With the aforementioned information, a document for each of the three countries selected for the case studies was prepared, which studies have served as a basis for the formulation of the first proposal of strategic lines for future action in post-disaster recovery processes. Based on this documentation, a Regional Workshop with Focal Points of the UNDP and of other UN Agencies will be carried out, after which and based on their results, the final documents of this phase of the Project will be drafted.

IV. BOLIVIA. ANALYSIS OF POST-DISASTER EXPERIENCES.

In keeping with the methodological guidelines of the Project, a one-day workshop was conducted in La Paz, in which participated the representatives of the following organizations: Vice-Ministry of Civil Defense, Vice-Ministry of Housing, Vice-Ministry of Public Investment and External Financing, Vice-Ministry of Planning, the Territorial Planning Directorate, the National Risk Reduction Service, the Municipal Government of La Paz, the Prefecture of La Paz, the UNDP, FAO, PMA, OPS/WHO, UNPFA and UNICEF. In addition, meetings were held with the Minister of Defense and the Major of La Paz.

As to the country's experiences in post-disaster recovery, the torrential rains that poured on the city of La Paz in February 2002 and the March 2003 Chima landslide, in the Department of La Paz, were both analyzed. A summary of these two events is presented as follows:

1. Floods in the City of La Paz. February 2002.

On February 19, 2002, torrential rains of an unprecedented level swept through the city of La Paz, causing flash floods responsible for 68 dead, 14 missing, 130 wounded, numerous damages to urban infrastructure and neighboring communities. The damages were estimated at approximately 10 Million Dollars.

Due to this event, the National Government declared the state of emergency for the affected area and authorized the transfer of resources to

the municipal government in order to handle the situation. In addition, it requested the UNDP to take over the coordination of international aid.

Furthermore, the government of La Paz established, in March 2002, the Permanent Committee for the Response and Management of Disasters and Emergencies, and in the month of June it created the Program for the Prevention of Risks, Emergency Response and Reconstruction of the Municipality of La Paz.

Subsequently, in August 2003, the Project for the strengthening of municipal capacity in the management of risks in La Paz was initiated with the help of the UNDP. In developing this plan some outstanding results were achieved, among which the creation of the Risk Management Unit, as part of the municipality's permanent structure is worth mentioning.

Today, the municipality has set up the Risk Management Municipal System, and the Risk Management Unit has been endowed with two operative instruments: the Plan for the Prevention and Response to Emergencies and the Risk Management Program; these two instruments constitute the backbone of the Municipal Development Plan.

We must also note that as of the year 2000, the municipal government initiated a construction program for risk control works, which has increased since the 2002 event; up until 2005 the investment for this work totaled US41 Million Dollars, including resources from the Inter-American Development Bank and bilateral cooperation. As a part of this program, the whole infrastructure damaged by the flood was rebuilt.

2. Landslide in Chima, Department of La Paz. March 2003.

Chima is a town of the municipality of Tipuani, Department of La Paz, located at 280 Kilometers from the municipality of La Paz. Its population amounts to 2,614 inhabitants and its main economic activity is auriferous exploitation, both on the surface and the subsoil, with a massive proliferation of informal mining in a territory with an abrupt topography and an intense geological activity.

On the 31st of March 2003, as a consequence of climatic phenomena and antropoc intervention, a great landslide overtook Chima, with a total of 545 dead, 3 missing, close to 30 per cent of the settlement destroyed and high risk damages in approximately 70 per cent of what remained standing.

The National Government declared the site an area of disaster and public calamity and requested the UNDP to coordinate international support; the Prefecture of the Department of La Paz assumed the coordination of all activities in the affected area.

Numerous international agencies, among which many United Nations agencies, supported the emergency response efforts; 200 families were moved to temporary shelters, while a solution to the housing problem was found, but the mining activity was totally reestablished. Direct damages were estimated at US\$1,213,000.

With the support of the UNDP, a Risk Management Unit was created in the Prefecture of the Department of La Paz, in charge of coordinating all the actions to be undertaken in the area. Likewise, the Chima Reconstruction Plan was prepared and the design for the construction of 200 houses in a risk-free area was made, which work was concluded in March 2005. A risk map for the municipality of Tipuani was also prepared and a flood warning system was made operational.

The construction of houses has not been taken care of mainly because resources for the corresponding program have not been made available, although disagreements among the members of the community as to the new site for the houses has also caused delays, as some families are not accepting the fact that they must move away from the mining exploitation area.

The following chapters refer to the different proposals made by the participants at the Workshop concerning each one of the subjects analyzed therein.

V. BOLIVIA'S CURRENT STATE OF PREPARATION FOR FUTURE POST-DISASTER RECOVERY PROCESSES

The first theme that was tackled at the Workshop refers to the level of preparation of national and local authorities to address, in an effective and timely manner, a recovery and sustainable development process following a great disaster.

The participants at the workshop recognize that the country has progressed substantially in dealing with socio-natural risks in the last few years. In particular, they highlighted the fact that as of the enactment in the year 2000 of a law formulated and promoted with the help of the UNDP, that is, the "Law for the Reduction of Risks and Response to Disasters and/or Emergencies", whereby the National Risk Reduction and Disaster and/or Emergency Attention System was created, the immediate response vision was changed to a vision centered on prevention, transferring responsibilities to the departments and local governments, although the transfer of resources for this was not specified.

As to disaster recovery processes, it has been recognized that, historically, such processes have not been planned and that, in general, houses have been rebuilt in the same places where the disaster occurred. However, some successful experiences were mentioned, particularly, one that was developed

in the city of La Paz after the 2000 floods, which has brought tangible results in terms of risk reduction for the city.

At the same time, the Municipal Risk System and the Municipal Risk Management Unit were created with the help of the UNDP, and the Emergency Prevention and Attention Plan and the Risk Management Program were designed, which have become the backbone of the current administration's Municipal Development Plan. This whole process has been recognized nationally and internationally and must be recorded as an experience to be taken advantage of by the country.

However, every one agrees that the country is not prepared to properly develop post-disaster recovery processes. Moreover, it has been noted that such processes in this country are highly and directly dependent on international cooperation and that none of the activities initiated for recovery efforts in the last few years would have been possible without external cooperation.

The principal weaknesses are linked to the absence of national policies in this field, the frail institutional structure and the acute crisis that the country is currently experiencing.

With regard to the risk and post-disaster recovery theme, the population and the institutions are not quite aware of its importance, to which we must add the lack of commitment from higher government levels. As a result, the Risk Reduction Law has been, despite its positive repercussions, more a government practice than a State policy, since there are various sectors, such as the education sector, that have not started working on the risk or the recovery theme, have no trained personnel available and cannot count on the main officials that were involved in the formulation and negotiation process of the law as they are no longer in office. In addition, the national sectors that have progressed in the handling of risks have not included in their activities, nor have they transferred to lower government levels, the knowledge and experiences acquired in this process, although it has been recognized that some of them have incorporated trained persons in risk management who hold positions in decision-making level.

Furthermore, the participants regret that both national and international organizations have created a subculture of assistance or dependence with regard to the persons affected by disasters, which has led these people to expect the government to replace everything that they have lost in a disaster. This is linked to the desire of providing quick assistance to those affected, to the fact that interests get in the way and to national and international entities participating in the process. The latter has also led to discrepancies in the handling of the response to these disasters, which has been different, depending on the territory in which they have taken place.

As regards the regulatory aspects, it has been acknowledged that the law for the reduction of risks and all subsequent rules establish guidelines and responsibilities for the integral management of risks, but that these have not

been sufficiently defined or followed by all the sectors. Among the causes of these deficiencies are the lack of regulations and the low dissemination of norms, which are still unknown to many public servants who work in the management of risks in their respective ministries.

Also noted is the existence of regulatory obstacles, particularly for the agricultural sector. The law for the Nation's general budget does not allow transfers or replacements in investments for natural persons, which makes it impossible to allocate resources for the reconstruction of family infrastructure lost after a disaster.

On the institutional theme there is consensus among the participants at the Workshop on the fact that as of the entering into force of the Risk Reduction Law, important achievements were made in the institutionality for the management of risks in the country, even though a complete system at all territorial levels has not yet been set up. Such law defined two governing bodies, the Ministry of Sustainable Development for prevention, mitigation and recovery activities, and the Ministry of National Defense for response actions in case of emergency and disasters. In a subsequent amendment to the law, the Ministry of Defense was designated as sole governing body and the Ministry of Sustainable Development as responsible for risk reduction policies and the inclusion of the theme in all planning processes. This situation has generated comprehension and coordination problems between the two Ministries.

The Prefectures and municipal administrations were given the main responsibility in all matters related to risks, in a decentralization context with a subsidiary focus, but they were not allocated new resources to carry out these functions. Also, the participants mentioned that in disaster situations it is common for national or international cooperation officials arriving on the scene to be unfamiliar with the organization of the work and the priorities of local and community authorities.

The 2000 Law established a work and coordination system at the national, sectoral and municipal levels, but the lack of coordination among the sectors and among territorial levels is highlighted as one of the main obstacles in progressing in risk reduction activities and in achieving effective recovery after the occurrence of a disaster. As a result, the progress made by the Ministry of Defense is superior to that of other Ministries, as is the case of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and, especially, the Ministry of Education. This is reflected, in turn, in the differences in vision and methods applied in reconstruction processes among various ministries.

The incorporation of risk reduction in the institutional culture of Prefectures and municipalities is still weak. This can be viewed in the failure to achieve a complete management of risks, which in turn results in the inadequate planning of human settlements in urban areas. However, the creation of Risk Management Units in Prefectures has allowed these to start budgeting resources for prevention and reconstruction efforts.

To the foregoing we must add that the country suffers from generalized institutional weakness, with a high rotation of personnel in the public sector and problems arising from the politization of positions in civil organizations.

On the other hand, it has been acknowledged that Bolivia's strong point lies in its planning system. Indeed, this system aims at promoting and articulating aspects related to sustainable development, territorial planning, decentralization and allocation of resources at the municipal level and, above all, it is a participatory planning system. Yet, this system is still weak, as is planning the use of the territory that does not include the risk concept. And there are no construction norms. Further, there is hardly any link between sectoral policies and risk reduction views, which prevents the establishment of scenarios and of the corresponding parameters and indicators for ensuring their proper follow-up.

In planning recovery processes, there is no criteria to prioritize themes according to their importance after a disaster, nor guidelines that can direct people on how to define the actions and sectors that require the most attention, which prevents officials from having the basic elements to negotiate international cooperation. There are also weaknesses in the evaluation and control mechanism, through which it would be possible to determine the effectiveness of the investments made after disasters.

As to information, there are no methodologies that can allow people to recover, analyze and disseminate information on what happened and what has been done in post-disaster situations, which prevents these experiences from being taken advantage of in future events or to prepare manuals or specific regulations on this subject. The evaluation missions for these situations fail to cover the experience in a complete or multi-disciplinary manner, and each sector has its own analysis and systematization methods and parameters, which results in the information provided being scattered and not comparable.

The national crisis leads, among other things, to a strong limitation in the availability of financial resources, both for risk reduction activities and for attending to the demands of post-disaster recovery processes, hence the high dependence on external resources in order to attend to these situations and the lack of solutions to the problems arising therefrom. This is why whenever a disaster occurs, one of the Government's priority activities is to request resources from international cooperation agencies, because the results obtained in the recovery process depend on this formality. This is also the reason why recovery actions end when external resources are extinguished, without any sustainability for the future.

Despite the fact that the Risk Reduction and Disaster Attention Trust Fund was created, it has not worked or its participation has been weak in properly determining post-disaster activities.

VI. MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED FOR FUTURE POST-DISASTER PROCESSES.

The second theme that was tackled at the Workshop refers to the type of measures that should be adopted in order to guarantee that the post-disaster recovery process is not carried out in an improvised and uncoordinated manner among the different institutional actions and the population.

The participants expressed the need to initiate awareness programs at institutions and their leaders and with the population at large on the importance of risk reduction and post-disaster recovery. Commitments and specific measures at decision-making levels are required so that policies for the complete management of risks, including recovery, may be effectively applied in a cross-cutting manner in all development activities in the country and so that decisions and resources at territorial levels may be truly decentralized.

It is necessary to define policies and norms related to the establishment of the financial responsibilities of the State and the society in risk reduction and recovery activities, and norms related to the contamination of rivers and the kind of economic support that must be given to the affected communities.

It has been considered highly convenient to broaden legislative work, with the purpose of improving the existing normativity on risk reduction and post-disaster recovery, with the issuance, among other things, of a construction code to be effectively put into practice at all territorial levels, especially at the local level, within the context of the National Risk Reduction System. It is also necessary to start actions in order to regulate more widely the existing laws so as to develop, among other things, norms that are linked to the Risk Reduction Trust Fund, thus making economic resources more available and expediting their obtainment for recovery processes. To this same end, a reform of the Treasury's budgeting guidelines is required. It is absolutely necessary to widely disseminate the norms in this field among the different national and local, public and private actors and the population, and to establish measures oriented at improving their compliance.

It is crucial to institutionalize the country's recovery processes and to increase the National Risk Reduction System's leadership capacity at all levels so that coordination among the different national, local and international bodies that work together on this theme may be strengthened. Particularly, it is imperative to work more in depth on the decentralization theme and to strengthen local entities, with guidelines, technical assistance and training and, above all, to respect their decisions. The Operating committees that function for emergencies should also act in recovery processes because all local development organs are represented therein.

The organization for recovery processes should establish a good system for the public rendition of accounts in connection with all the resources allocated for recovery.

The need to strengthen planning capacities was expressed, as they should be based on instruments, such as instruments for planning the use of land and construction norms. Planning should also be participatory and involve the communities at risk and those affected by disasters, so that they may take part in defining needs, priorities and capacities, in the proper allocation of resources and in supervising and controlling their execution.

The participants at the Workshop mentioned the importance of having prior and immediate availability of a national plan or a procedures manual for rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, prepared in agreement with all national, sectoral and territorial levels and with international cooperation. Same should include territorial planning with all risks incorporated, the different risk scenarios per region, including chronic and daily disasters that the community has grown accustomed to without adopting measures for their reduction or for attending to their consequences. This manual should also define the functions of all the actors, from the presidential level to the local level.

The planning system must be capable of defining the performance and actions of international cooperation in a recovery process, and it must define priority sectors, execution guidelines and all the actions envisaged in a long-term policy.

The information theme was considered to be one of the biggest problems in the country, which must be solved, at least as far as this issue is concerned. It is necessary to have easily available geographic, technical and specialized information on risks, and risk maps for each territory and community, with the participation of the latter. It is deemed relevant to analyze and systematize the information on risks and the experiences acquired on the subject of disasters in the country and to broadly disseminate these analyses among all national and local sectors, so that, among other things, they may be taken advantage of and be used as feedback in the definition of policies in this regard. The participants alluded to the need to strengthen the system for preparing censuses of the population affected by disasters due to their implications in the financing of recovery processes.

As to the social theme related to disasters, the need to recover knowledge as well as ancestral forms of organization and to strengthen them was highlighted, with emphasis on those where prevail such aspects as solidarity, subsidiarity, organization, respect for work and life in harmony with the environment. Also proposed was the need to find an effective way for development projects to visualize and include the gender approach, which has not been possible thus far. The convenience of incorporating risk themes in formal education, starting from the primary or elementary level, was reiterated.

The need to promote insurance and protection programs and the importance of working on the perception of risk, from the perspective of cultural differences and of the urban or rural origin of communities, was also suggested. It is also necessary to find a solution to the availability of land for recovery processes since there have been times where, due to high ownership

of land or the amount of land already owned, it has been impossible to find places to relocate the affected population. Finally, the National Government needs to establish an agenda for programs and priorities that can allow it to better negotiate with international cooperation.

VII. RISK REDUCTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN POST-DISASTER RECOVERY PROCESSES.

It was also discussed at the Workshop how to ensure that post-disaster recovery programs include the risk reduction concept and the medium and long-term sustainable development vision.

It has been recognized that there should be a close connection between recovery processes and sustainable development, but it has been questioned whether this is clear enough and whether our countries have achieved a real level of sustainable development. In Bolivia, the State furthers a sustainable development vision, but is far from achieving it. If activities linked to development do not integrate risk reduction, territorial planning and environmental management cannot lead to a country's sustainable development.

Information programs must be increased for creating awareness among the population and institutions and for increasing knowledge on the vulnerabilities and risks, and on development and governance.

Likewise, it is necessary to better define individual and shared responsibilities, which can be useful in establishing coordination agreements among institutions regarding this subject.

People should not only think about the consequences of disasters, but especially how to attack their causes in order to achieve the sustainability of recovery activities. This is why it is absolutely necessary to fully identify the elements that contribute to the social creation of risks and establish their relationship with the development model.

The risk reduction vision that reigns in the country, both among the authorities and the population, is focused on engineering, that is to say, the sole solution to the risk issue lies on mitigation physical works. This vision must change and be oriented at what really must be the integral management of risks. Moreover, physical works entail high costs and, in general, the country does not have the sufficient financial resources to execute them. And with the current approach, many effective activities that require little resources are underestimated.

Furthermore, for recovery activities to achieve sustainability it is necessary for them to be based on participatory planning, with the agreement of all the actors of the area affected. This type of planning must not disregard the fact that poverty is one of the factors that causes social vulnerability and must

consider all the social aspects resulting from risks and disasters, especially those originating in the conflict situations that exist in the communities affected.

For activities in this field to be sustainable, another decisive fact is for the risk variable and risk indicators to be incorporated into the planning system, which requires that they be supported by a State macro-policy in Bolivia. As an instrument for this purpose, it has been recommended to include the evaluation of risks in the evaluation sheets or questionnaires for public investments, which should also include the proper training and the provision of scientific- technical information.

The population must be sensibilized, educated and trained in risk matters and in the use of the instruments that are available to them for reducing such risks. In these conditions we can expect communities to assume their own responsibility and not to depend on the government and international cooperation to solve their problems.

VIII. STRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR POST-DISASTER RECOVERY

Another theme that was addressed at the Workshop was that related to the characteristics of the structure and the institutional mechanisms that would be desirable in order to formulate and execute a post-disaster recovery and development plan. The main proposals or statements in this regard are summarized as follows:

The participants considered that the legislation that created the National Risk Reduction System establishes a permanent organizational structure for the complete management of risks, that is, a structure including the post-disaster recovery phase. This is the reason why it is not justifiable to create different structures to attend to post-disaster situations, since the purpose of the law is to make use of the existing institutional capacities. However, competences and coordination mechanisms among entities must be better defined for recovery processes and they must be institutionalized within each of these entities. Special mention was made of the responsibilities of the Defense and Sustainable Development ministries.

The participants consider that, if a national plan for post-disaster recovery is made available, it must establish the basic guidelines and the actions to be undertaken by each one of the entities of the National System in order to avoid uncoordinated and duplicated efforts. At any rate, it is necessary to develop and strengthen the National System, endowing it with the norms, instruments, manuals, guides and training necessary to facilitate all actions.

The need to better define the institutional structure for local recovery was highlighted. The participants thought of a modular structure that could be adapted to the capacities of each administration and that could work on the risk issue in an integral manner. For this, it would have to be flexible enough to ensure continuity in the handling of risks, emergencies and post-disaster

recovery as a sole process. But the main aspect is the definition of responsibilities and the tasks to be initiated at the local level.

IX. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN POST-DISASTER RECOVERY PROCESSES.

The last theme that was discussed at the Workshop is the kind of work that the UNDP and the Agencies of the United Nations System could start to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the support given to the government in the post-disaster recovery and development phase. In this regard, the proposals and statements were complemented by interviews with the Resident Coordinator and the UNDP Focal Point, as well as an analysis of documents on UNPD performance in recent recovery processes.

The assistants to the Workshop highlighted the role of the UNDP and other UN agencies in supporting prevention, response and post-disaster recovery activities. In particular, they mentioned the UNDP collaboration in the promotion of the risk theme, in the creation of the National Risk Reduction System, its support to the Municipality of La Paz in the creation of the Municipal System, the Program and Unit for the Management of Risks and its support to the Prefecture of La Paz during the Chima landslide. Furthermore, they stressed the need for UN agencies to be better coordinated among themselves in order to be efficient and effective in their work and the need to have a better coordination of the United Nations System with the National Government in order to mobilize international resources in post-disaster situations.

As to international cooperation in general, the participants reiterated the fact that the country is almost totally dependent on it for recovery activities. In this respect they criticized the fact that many times international institutions, especially NGOs, totally disregard the governmental entities in their programs and make decisions on matters independently, without coordinating or determining priorities with the authorities, thus contributing to the lack of institutionalization of the State. By so doing, they alter governmental actions and leave others unfinished, as their conclusion and sustainability are left in the hands of municipalities. This also causes problems among the different sectors of development. This lack of coordination sometimes leads to the duplication of efforts among the different actors.

Therefore, it is necessary to have mechanisms, instruments and data bases in order to establish coordination among international cooperation agencies and the Government and to define priorities and coverage. However, it has been also acknowledged that it is the Government's responsibility to set a framework for action that can facilitate and orient external cooperation programs. Likewise, it would be convenient for international cooperation agencies to consider a more thorough follow-up of post-disaster activities while communities progress in their recovery processes.

It was recommended that the UNDP continue and increase its efforts to promote the integral management of risk in the country. For this, the participants proposed carrying out public information, sensibilization and awareness programs at the political level, as well as seminars, training and taking advantage of the country's political contexts, such as the probable constituent assembly and the current process for the formulation of development plans. They also proposed that in each disaster situation, the UNDP promote and support the Government in establishing supervision and follow-up mechanisms for the funds allocated to solve these problems. The UNDP is also requested to give assistance in methodologies for the evaluation of post-disaster damages, since UN agencies do these evaluations, but do not train the country's public servants in this regard.

Finally, the crisis that the country is experiencing, which translates, among other things, into great institutional instability, has made international cooperation resources decrease for Bolivia in the last two years, thus restricting the mobilization of resources by the UNDP and increasing external debt. There is also a substantial proportion of international resources that are channeled through NGOs. These tend to have their own agendas and priorities, which not always correspond to national agendas and priorities.

X. UNDP COOPERATION IN RECOVERY PROCESSES

In general, the different agencies of the United Nations System have participated in the response to the disaster situations that have occurred in the country. Following is a summary of the principal activities developed by the UNDP in post-disaster recovery processes in Bolivia.

1. Floods in the City of La Paz. February 2002.

Due to these floods, the project for the Strengthening of Municipal Capacity for the Management of Risks in La Paz was initiated in August 2003, with resources from the BCPR, UNDP Bolivia and the Municipality of La Paz.

Many were the achievements with this project, of which the following are worth mentioning: the incorporation of risk reduction in the Municipal Development Plan and in sectoral municipal programs; the creation and inclusion of the Risk Management Unit in the municipal structure; the preparation and socialization of a map of socio-natural risks for the municipality of La Paz; the establishment of a control and community early warning system for flash floods; training and awareness among the different actors; the information strategy regarding risks and disasters; a big information diffusion campaign for citizens; a disaster drill in the city; the publication and dissemination of charts, risk maps and audiovisual material in this regard.

We must also mention that, at the request of the National Government, the UNPD acted as coordinator for the international aid received for this event.

The achievements of this project have been publicly acknowledged, according to the mayor of La Paz, who as a result considers the UNPD to be a strategic ally of the municipal administration in the incorporation of risk management, and has expressed that all the works that have been developed to reduce risks in this field have contributed to improving governance in the municipality.

1. Landslide in Chima, Department of La Paz. March 2003.

With resources from the UNPD, the governments of Denmark and Spain and OCHA, the UNPD subscribed, with the Prefecture of the Department of La Paz, the Project for strengthening institutional capacity for the management of risks in the Department of La Paz, whose activities started three months after the landslide in Chima.

In developing the project, Risk Management Units in the Prefecture of this Department and the municipal government of Tipuani were created; the Emergency Operational Committee in the Prefecture was institutionalized, the Chima Reconstruction Plan was formulated, 200 houses that should be relocated were designed, a risk map for the municipality of Tipuani and a risk management community plan for Chima were prepared, an early warning plan for floods in the riverbed of the Kaka river was made operational, institutional capacities in the management for the reduction of risks in the Prefecture and the municipality were strengthened, training was given at the departmental level, at the municipality of Tipuani and for the population of Chima, and methodological guides for the inclusion of risk management in the formulation of projects were prepared.

In addition, at the request of the national government, the UNDP acted as coordinator for the international aid received for this event.

Due to the positive results achieved by this project, the UNDP has received recognition from different authorities in Bolivia.