South America (2020)

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1 Introduction**

By the close of 2020, 69% of the countries in America and the Caribbean had adopted (or were in the process of adopting) national disaster risk reduction strategies aligned to the Sendai Framework.¹ 2020, however, was also the year where the attention of national governments and regional organizations shifted to COVID-19 pandemic disaster response. In the Americas, especially in South America, the regional organizations primarily focused their disaster law efforts on the response to COVID-19. There were some other significant developments, including the 'Guide for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance among the Member States of the Andean Community' and UNDRR's and ParlAmericas',² 'Guide on Supporting a Post-COVID-19 Green Economic Recovery', which included a section on how parliaments can apply the Sendai Framework in their efforts to build back better.³

In order to analyze the disaster law initiatives adopted in the region, this report prioritised five organizations: the Organization of American States (OAS), the Forum for the Progress and Development of South America (PROSUR),⁴ the Andean Community (CAN),⁵ the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR),⁶ and the Pacific Alliance (PA). Notably, MERCOSUR and CAN

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1 UNDRR, Annual Report (2020) 37. The 24 countries are: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America and Uruguay.

2 An institution composed of 35 national legislatures from North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean. ParlAmericas promotes parliamentary diplomacy in the Inter-American System. More information at <<https://www.parlAmericas.org/>>, last accessed (as any subsequent URL) on 15 August 2021.

3 *Ibid.* See: Guide on Supporting a Post-COVID-19 Green Economic Recovery: <https://www.parlAmericas.org/uploads/documents/Green_Recovery_ENG.pdf>.

4 Spanish: *Foro para el Progreso y Desarrollo de América del Sur*, PROSUR.

5 Spanish: *Comunidad Andina*, CAN.

6 Spanish: Mercado Común del Sur, MERCOSUR.

incorporated disaster risk reduction policy into planning and committed to submitting regional Sendai Framework Monitoring (SFM) reports in 2021.⁷

2 Organization of American States (OAS)

Eta and Iota hurricanes caused disasters in Central and North America and Caribbean Countries.⁸ Moreover, these events ‘worsen the already demanding and difficult public health and economic situation, stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic’.⁹ Due to these catastrophic situations, in November 2020, the Permanent Council of the OAS adopted the resolution ‘Solidarity with the peoples and governments of the hemisphere that have been struck by natural disasters’.¹⁰ In this resolution, the OAS Permanent Council recognized ‘the importance of an inter-American approach to prevention, mitigation, and response [in order] to support effective and efficient disaster management and recovery in the Americas’.¹¹ Therefore, the Council appealed ‘to international and regional financial and development institutions to provide the affected states with swift access to financing to support, urgently, vital humanitarian responses and economic and social reconstruction’.¹² This resolution emphasized that cooperation is indispensable for responding to disasters.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the OAS Permanent Council adopted a resolution, which called for a unified, cooperative hemispheric response taken in solidarity by Member States and inter-American institutions to mitigate adverse impacts and accelerate recovery.¹³ Also, in this resolution, the Permanent Council welcomed regional efforts ‘to deploy available resources and to explore additional measures needed to respond to the crisis, facilitate regional action, and bolster economic resilience during and after the COVID-19 pandemic’.¹⁴

7 UNDRR, Annual Report (2020) 47.

8 OAS, ‘CP/DEC. 73 (2307/20) SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLES AND GOVERNMENTS OF THE HEMISPHERE THAT HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY NATURAL DISASTERS’ (18 November 2020). <http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/english/hist_20/cp43293e03.docx>.

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Ibid.*

12 *Ibid.*, para 4.

13 OAS, ‘CP/RES. 1151 (2280/20) THE OAS RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC’ (16 April 2020). <http://www.oas.org/en/council/CP/documentation/res_decs/> para 1.

14 *Ibid.*, para 5.

Additionally, the High Authorities of the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG)¹⁵ adopted the declaration 'Addressing Corruption, Integrity and Democratic Governance associated with COVID-19'.¹⁶ These institutions committed that their loan or technical assistance programs will apply safeguard standards to ensure transparency in contracting and promote public data availability throughout project cycles.¹⁷ Moreover, the signed entities 'placed special emphasis on establishing measures to promote their accountability mechanisms'.¹⁸ These measures mainly focus on monitoring the use of emergency resources.¹⁹

Furthermore, the OAS General Assembly approved the resolution 'Advancing Hemispheric Security: A Multidimensional Approach'.²⁰ Within the framework of the Committee on Hemispheric Security (CSH), the General Assembly encouraged Member States to improve the protection of critical infrastructure against risk and to provide their strategies, policies, best practices, and lessons learned, in order to obtain a common understanding of basic critical infrastructure protection terminology and respective identification of critical infrastructure sectors.²¹ As part of this resolution, States should share their approaches to identify, assess, and manage risks to critical infrastructure; and the information about their respective response and recovery mechanisms.²² Moreover, the General Assembly ordered the General Secretariat 'to complete the development of a Model National Strategy on Protection of Critical

15 JSWG is integrated by the Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the World Bank, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

16 Available at <http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/english/HIST_20/CMBRS01820e10.docX>.

17 OAS, 'Grupo de Trabajo Conjunto de Cumbres apuesta a reducir los riesgos de corrupción durante la crisis del COVID-19' (14 September 2020) <https://www.oas.org/es/centro_noticias/comunicado_prensa.asp?sCodigo=C-094%2F20> accessed 23 July 2020>.

18 *Ibid.*

19 OAS, 'Addressing Corruption, Integrity and Democratic Governance Risks associated with COVID-19 Joint Declaration' (14 September 2020) at <<http://www.summit-americas.org/DeclaracionENG14sept.pdf>> para. 1.

20 OAS, 'AG/RES. 2950 (L-O/20) ADVANCING HEMISPHERIC SECURITY: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH' (21 October 2020) at <<http://www.oas.org/en/sla/docs/AG08273E10.pdf>>.

21 *Ibid.*, para 125.

22 *Ibid.*

Infrastructure in the Event of Natural Disasters'.²³ Importantly, this resolution asked the Inter-American Development Bank to create 'a set of standard operating procedures to assist member states and regional organizations that participate in humanitarian assistance and disaster response operations in mitigating the possible spread of COVID-19 and which could serve as a basis for future disaster response in the region'.²⁴ Finally, the OAS General Assembly restates its support for the White Helmets²⁵ 'as an invaluable hemispheric prevention, reduction, and response mechanism against disasters for the fight against hunger and poverty'.²⁶ Likewise, the resolution encouraged the White Helmets 'to continue fostering growing regional humanitarian collaboration and, in that context, to continue sharing its experience and best practices in disaster prevention, preparedness, and response, particularly in the international context of the COVID-19 pandemic'.²⁷

3 PROSUR²⁸

In March 2020, the Presidents of PROSUR adopted a Presidential Statement on joint actions to face the coronavirus pandemic.²⁹ Here, the presidents agreed to '[b]ring together criteria in decision-making in the management of the emergency caused by the Coronavirus, sharing reliable diagnoses and

²³ *Ibid.*, para 126.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, para 169.

²⁵ 'White Helmets is a project that has received the support of the United Nations General Assembly, which recognized the practical role that the White Helmets can play in the service of emergency humanitarian assistance', [OAS General Assembly] resolution AG/RES. 1351 (XXV-O / 95) invited the General Secretariat, in coordination with the Permanent Council, to promote at the regional level the White Helmets Initiative already adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (resolution 49/139) in December 1994 <<http://www.oas.org/juridico/spanish/ag-res96/Res-1403.htm>>.

²⁶ OAS, 'AG/RES. 2950 (L-O/20) ADVANCING HEMISPHERIC SECURITY: A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH' (21 October 2020) at <<http://www.oas.org/en/sla/docs/AG08273E10.pdf>>, para. 15.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 16.

²⁸ Currently, eight countries in South America have signed the PROSUR charter: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, and Peru. See <<https://foroprosur.org/sobre-prosur/>>.

²⁹ PROSUR, 'Declaración Presidencial de PROSUR sobre acciones conjuntas para enfrentar la pandemia del coronavirus' (17 March 2020) at <<https://foroprosur.org/declaracion-presidencial-de-prosur-sobre-acciones-conjuntas-para-enfrentar-la-pandemia-del-coronavirus/>>.

epidemiological information about the virus'.³⁰ Moreover, the Statement seeks to prevent the measures adopted from harming the free movement of goods, especially those necessary for health care.³¹ Later, in May, the presidents signed a second declaration, requesting to strengthen international governance in response to epidemics and pandemics; for instance, through initiatives such as adopting a Global Instrument for Multidimensional Preparedness and Response to Pandemics, proposed in the framework of the WHO.³²

In August, another Declaration encouraged the promotion of 'regional cooperation to achieve universal, equitable and timely access to the future vaccine against COVID-19 in South America'.³³ This Declaration states that the COVID vaccine is a global public good, which requests joint purchase and technology transfer for local production.³⁴ Furthermore, the presidents committed themselves to 'promote [...] dialogue, coordination and consensus around epidemiological information, migration and borders, access to international credits, free movement of goods and joint purchases of medical supplies'.³⁵ In fact, in December, PROSUR State Parties agreed to '[p]romote and coordinate the implementation of policies that facilitate the progressive and responsible transit of people, [...] as well as the transit of goods, especially those necessary to mitigate the effects of COVID-19'.³⁶

In addition, Chile as *pro tempore* President of PROSUR promoted an inter-ministerial coordination through five working groups: 'i) Epidemiological Criteria and Data Availability; ii) Access to International Credits; iii) Joint Purchases of Medicines and Medical Supplies; iv) Transit of Essential Goods, and v) Transit of People'.³⁷ Actually, the Working group on Transit of Essential Goods aims to share information on border management and transport

30 *Ibid.*, para 1.

31 *Ibid.*, para 4.

32 PROSUR, 'Segunda Declaración Presidencial de PROSUR sobre Acciones Conjuntas para Enfrentar la Pandemia del Coronavirus' (26 May 2020) <<https://foroprosur.org/segunda-declaracion-presidencial-de-prosur-sobre-acciones-conjuntas-para-enfrentar-la-pandemia-del-coronavirus/>> para 7.

33 PROSUR, 'Declaración Presidencial de PROSUR' (27 August 2020) <<https://foroprosur.org/declaracion-presidencial-de-prosur/>> para 1.

34 *Ibid.*

35 *Ibid.*, para 2.

36 PROSUR, 'Declaración de Cumbre Presidencial PROSUR' (12 december 2020) <https://foroprosur.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/DECLARACION_Presidencial_12-12-2020.pdf> para 5.

37 PROSUR, 'Presidencia Pro Tempore Chile. Informe de Gestión PROSUR Marzo 2019–Diciembre 2020' (11 December 2020) <https://foroprosur.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/PROSUR_Informe_de_Gestion_2020.pdf>.

logistics measures to find synergies that guarantee the free movement of essential goods across borders. Two groups facilitate information on the measures implemented on: i) Border Management, and ii) Transportation Logistics.³⁸

Besides the actions related to the pandemic, PROSUR has a 'Disaster Risk Management Group for Resilient Development'; however, the pandemic delayed the activities of this Group.³⁹ Nevertheless, based on the experience obtained in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic, this Group postponed other activities until 2021.⁴⁰

4 Andean Community (CAN)

Undoubtedly, the main advance in the Andean system, integrated by Colombia, Perú, Colombia, and Bolivia, was the approval of the updated 'Guide for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance among the Member States'. The Guide entered into force from the date of its publication in the Official Gazette of the Cartagena Agreement on July 9, 2020.⁴¹ The Member Countries of the Andean Community, through their respective Foreign Ministries, in coordination with the national institutions in charge of disaster risk management, and other public entities involved in responding to emergencies, apply the Guide in cooperation processes for mutual humanitarian assistance.⁴² Nevertheless, the Guide does not exclude Member Countries from activating any request for humanitarian assistance through diplomatic channels or other international humanitarian coordination mechanisms within the framework of the United Nations and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.⁴³ This Guide provides procedures that will promote, facilitate and support the existing coordination mechanisms, in order to complement the efforts of the affected Country or Member Countries.⁴⁴ Specifically, this Guide calls upon Member States to:

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ PROSUR, 'Reporte de Actividades 2019–2020: Grupo de Gestión del Riesgo de Desastres para el Desarrollo Resiliente' (4 December 2020) at <https://foroprosur.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/GRD_Reporte_de_actividades_2019-2020.pdf>.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Andean Community, 'Decisión 860: Aprobación de la "Guía para la Coordinación de la Asistencia Humanitaria entre los Países Miembros de la Comunidad Andina"' (8 July 2020) <<http://www.comunidadandina.org/DocOficialesFiles/Gacetitas/Gaceta%204017.pdf>> at 6.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

- Define the subregional coordination mechanism for the adequate management of humanitarian assistance among the Member States;
- Establish, *a priori*, the modalities of humanitarian assistance among the CAN Member States, observing minimum standards and requirements in order to ensure their suitability, and according to the needs presented by the Affected States;
- Identify and define the roles of the institutions in charge of managing humanitarian assistance in the CAN Member States, within the framework of the implementation of the Guide;
- Determine the different modalities through which the coordination of humanitarian assistance will be activated at the subregional level; and,
- Define the role of the Secretary General, in the coordination agreed between the CAN Member States.⁴⁵

Concerning the COVID-19 pandemic, in April 2020, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs signed a Declaration regarding the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19).⁴⁶ This Declaration underlines the importance of the existing mechanisms and institutions for managing the effects of the pandemic.⁴⁷ Also, the Ministers highlighted '[t]he importance of strengthening regional health integration mechanisms to achieve rapid and efficient results in the context of the current crisis'.⁴⁸ Also, the Declaration expresses the willingness to evaluate possible viable measures for the joint purchase of medical supplies.⁴⁹

5 Mercosur⁵⁰

In response to COVID-19, one of the essential commitments was the 'Declaration of Mercosur Presidents on Regional Coordination for the Containment and Mitigation of Coronavirus and its Impact', where the States Parties agreed to interchange information of the local measures related to international trade

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 4–5.

⁴⁶ Andean Community, 'Declaración de los Ministros de Relaciones Exteriores y de Comercio Exterior de la Comunidad Andina respecto a la propagación del coronavirus (COVID-19)' (8 April 2020) at <<http://www.comunidadandina.org/Prensa.aspx?id=12199&accion=detalle&cat=NP&title=declaracion-de-los-m>>.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, para 7.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, para 5.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, para 4.

⁵⁰ States Parties: Argentina; Brazil; Paraguay; Uruguay; and Venezuela (suspended in all the rights and obligations). Associated States: Chile; Colombia; Ecuador; Guyana; Peru; and Surinam. Bolivia is in the process of accession. See <<https://www.mercosur.int/en/about-mercosur/mercosur-countries/>>.

during the pandemic.⁵¹ Actually, MERCOSUR countries approved the free circulation of cargo, goods, and inputs.⁵² Nevertheless, they also agreed on solid border control to regulate people's entry.⁵³ The States Parties also addressed economic measures such as bank loans to strengthen the economy and achieve a speedy recovery.⁵⁴ In March 2020, the MERCOSUR presidents made several commitments focused on preventing and addressing the complications caused by COVID-19, including facilitating the return of citizens and residents within MERCOSUR member states and promoting expedite the movement of goods and services.⁵⁵

Additionally, the governments promoted several initiatives under the Fund for the Structural Convergence of MERCOSUR (FOCEM),⁵⁶ among others:

- Strengthen the Network's research in immunology and infectious diseases, with emphasis on the detection and treatment of COVID-19;⁵⁷
- Financed the plurinational project 'Research, Education and Biotechnologies applied to Health', purchasing supplies for operators and implementing new techniques to detect COVID-19 in patients.⁵⁸

51 MERCOSUR, '29ª Edición del Informe Semestral – Primer semestre 2020' (October 2020) <<https://www.mercosur.int/documento/29a-edicion-del-informe-semestral-primer-semestre-2020/>> at 13.

52 MERCOSUR, 'Los presidentes de la región acuerdan medidas para combatir el Covid-19' (17 March 2020) <<https://www.mercosur.int/los-presidentes-de-la-region-acuerdan-medidas-para-combatir-el-covid-19/>>.

53 *Ibid.*

54 *Ibid.*

55 MERCOSUR, 'Declaración de los Presidentes del MERCOSUR sobre coordinación regional para la contención y mitigación del coronavirus y su impacto' (18 March 2020) at <<https://www.iri.edu.ar/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/bo-aratina-71-mercotur-declaracionpresidentes.pdf>>.

56 MERCOSUR 'Qué es FOCEM' (17 May 2016) at <<https://focem.mercosur.int/es/que-es-focem/>> 'FOCEM is a fund destined to finance projects to promote structural convergence; develop competitiveness; promote social cohesion, particularly in smaller economies and less developed regions and support the functioning of the institutional structure and the strengthening of the integration process'.

57 MERCOSUR, 'Paraguay inició trámites en el Mercosur para acelerar la investigación de enfermedades infecciosas y del COVID-19' (24 March 2020) at <<https://www.mercosur.int/paraguay-inicio-tramites-en-el-mercotur-para-acelerar-la-investigacion-de-enfermedades-infecciosas-y-del-covid-19/>>.

58 MERCOSUR, 'Esfuerzo regional contra la pandemia: el MERCOSUR aprobó un fondo de emergencia de US\$16 millones que serán destinados en su totalidad al combate coordinado contra el COVID-19' (3 April 2020) at <<https://www.mercosur.int/esfuerzo-regional-contra-la-pandemia-el-mercotur-aprobo-un-fondo-de-emergencia-de-us16-millones-que-seran-destinados-en-su-totalidad-al-combate-coordinado-contra-el-covid-19/>>.

- Production of rapid molecular tests (PCR kits) for the diagnosis and tests that detect the disease in the serum of patients.⁵⁹

In addition, the High Authorities on Human Rights of MERCOSUR approved a 'Declaration on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in a Situation of a COVID-19 Pandemic', which exposed the measures adopted in the face of the emergency caused by COVID-19 and highlighted the importance of reinforcing international cooperation.⁶⁰ Indeed, this Declaration seeks to guarantee the fundamental right to the protection of life and health of the population through the prevention, treatment, and control of all epidemic, endemic, occupational and other diseases, with particular focus on vulnerable groups.⁶¹

In October 2020, the XXII Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of Integral Management of Disaster Risks of MERCOSUR took place on-line. The meeting focused on 'the pandemic and the measures taken at the national level, its regional situation and [...] perspectives, focusing on the management of shelters and mitigation measures'.⁶²

Finally, on December 16, 2020, the LVII Summit of MERCOSUR Presidents reaffirmed the commitment to efficient and permanent coordination to halt the advance of the coronavirus, mainly in border areas, in order to mitigate its health, economic and social consequences and strengthen regional integration, in line with what was agreed in the 'Declaration of the Presidents of MERCOSUR on regional coordination for the containment and mitigation of the Coronavirus and its impact'.⁶³

59 MERCOSUR, 'Mercosur financia 50.000 kits PCR de diagnóstico de COVID-19 y 400.000 de serodiagnóstico' (28 May 2020) at <<https://www.mercosur.int/mercocur-financia-50-000-kits-pcr-de-diagnostico-de-covid-19-y-400-000-de-serodiagnostico/>>.

60 MERCOSUR, 'Declaración de Asunción sobre la Promoción y Protección de los Derechos Humanos en Situación de Pandemia COVID-19' (8 June 2020) at <<https://www.mercosur.int/declaracion-de-asuncion-sobre-la-promocion-y-proteccion-de-los-derechos-humanos-en-situacion-de-pandemia-covid-19/>>.

61 IPPDH, 'Declaración de Asunción de la Reunión de Altas Autoridades sobre Derechos Humanos en el MERCOSUR sobre la Promoción y Protección de los Derechos Humanos en Situación de Pandemia Covid-19' (28 July 2020) at <<https://www.ippdh.mercosur.int/declaracion-de-asuncion-de-la-reunion-de-altas-autoridades-sobre-derechos-humanos-en-el-mercocur-sobre-la-promocion-y-proteccion-de-los-derechos-humanos-en-situacion-de-pandemia-covid-19/>>.

62 MERCOSUR, '29ª Edición del Informe Semestral – Primer semestre 2020' (October 2020) <<https://www.mercosur.int/documento/29a-edicion-del-informe-semestral-primer-semestre-2020/>> at 21.

63 MERCOSUR, 'COMUNICADO CONJUNTO DE PRESIDENTES DE LOS ESTADOS PARTES Y ESTADOS ASOCIADOS DEL MERCOSUR' (16 December 2020) at <https://documentos.mercosur.int/simfiles/comunicados/82547_COMUNICADO%20CONJUNTO%20DE%20LOS%20ESTADOS%20PARTES%20E%20ASOCIADOS-ES.pdf>.

6 Pacific Alliance (PA)⁶⁴

In 2018, the PA registered a critical project related to DRR.⁶⁵ However, like the other regional organizations, the PA focused its actions in 2020 on the COVID pandemic. The High-Level Group of the PA⁶⁶ evaluated possible effects of the situation that presented the COVID-19 pandemic on the region's economies and adopted the Declaration of the Pacific Alliance on the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶⁷ This Group stressed the importance of constant information exchange and best practices to support citizens abroad and address logistical difficulties.⁶⁸ Moreover, having in mind the recovery phase, the Pacific Alliance focused on the need to 'promote a rapid recovery of economic activity and contribute to the economic growth and well-being of the Alliance's citizens'.⁶⁹

Additionally, in April 2020, the PA Member State delegates agreed on a work plan focused on responding to the economic and social effects of the pandemic caused by the COVID-19.⁷⁰ This work plan contains thirteen components, which seek an exchange of information on all the measures that the PA countries are adopting in response to the pandemic, including a) the automation of logistics processes; b) the incorporation of small and medium-sized enterprises into the world of electronic commerce; and c) the reactivation of the tourism sector through the socialization of experiences.⁷¹

Another vital instrument in this regional process is the 'Additional Protocol to the Framework Agreement of the Pacific Alliance', which entered into force on May 1, 2016. In times of crisis, this Additional Protocol and its First Modifying Protocol help to keep the economy active and provide solutions that allow the population to stay safe at home and, at the same time, support companies to continue with their economic activity through electronic and

64 'The Pacific Alliance is an initiative of regional integration comprised by Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, officially established on 28 April, 2011', see <<https://alianzapacifico.net/en/what-is-the-pacific-alliance/>>.

65 Available at <<https://alianzapacifico.net/el-bono-catastrofico-gestion-de-riesgo-de-la-alianza-del-pacifico/>>.

66 Made up of the Vice Ministers of Foreign Trade and Foreign Relations.

67 Pacific Alliance, 'Declaración de la Alianza del Pacífico sobre la pandemia del COVID-19' (13 March 2020) at <<https://alianzapacifico.net/declaracion-de-la-alianza-del-pacifico-sobre-la-pandemia-del-covid-19/>>.

68 *Ibid.*

69 *Ibid.*, para 3.

70 Pacific Alliance, 'Plan de Trabajo frente al COVID-19' (1 August 2020) at <https://alianza-pacifico.net/wpcontent/uploads/PLAN_TRABAJO_COVID_19.pdf>.

71 *Ibid.*

cross-border trade, offering security standards to trade in goods and services.⁷² For instance, the protocol allows for Digital/Electronic Signatures to be recognized within the Pacific Alliance for use in State administrative procedures between the State Parties and private digital transactions.⁷³

7 Concluding Remarks

In the Americas, the regional organizations called for solidarity and cooperation among the members. Cooperation is essential for responding to catastrophic events; for instance, OAS organs demanded regional cooperation and financial support in response to the pandemic and other disasters. On top of that, cooperation is also fundamental for prevention and mitigation. In addition, cooperation and financial support are essential for recuperation and reconstruction phases. Therefore, cooperation must be encouraged in all the stages of disaster risk management.

While the OAS promoted political resolutions that stressed the weight of having a disaster risk management approach, MERCOSUR covers diverse implications of the pandemic, from human rights, to trade, including disaster risk management with concrete projects. CAN highlight the importance of regional health integration mechanisms. PROSUR concerns the region's economy, ensuring access to information, financial resources, technology, and vaccines. The PA concentrates its efforts on the pandemic, not only in the response phase but also in the recovery. Therefore, one of the lessons of this pandemic could be to have an interdisciplinary approach in all disasters risk management phases.

These regional organizations highlighted that it is necessary to articulate efforts and institutions to recover from the effects of the pandemic. This articulation should include social and economic institutions. For instance, access to medical supplies and vaccines was one of the main concerns of regional forums. Therefore, these organizations should work together on that objective. Moreover, technology transfer and financial assistance should be part of their shared agenda. Furthermore, any agenda must have a human rights approach, as MERCOSUR does.

72 Pacific Alliance, 'Comercio de servicios ante el COVID-19' (Additional Protocol to the Framework Agreement of the Pacific Alliance) (8 September 2020) at <https://alianza.pacifico.net/wp-content/uploads/OnePager_comercioap-infografia-actualizada.pdf>.

73 *Ibid.*

As the OAS declaration 'Addressing Corruption, Integrity and Democratic Governance associated with COVID-19' suggested, one of the main concerns in the region seems to be corruption during emergencies; therefore, the regional organizations should keep promoting transparency and accountability among their members and agencies. A significant find is that PROSUR, CAN, MERCOSUR, and the PA created an inventory of the measures adopted by each country to facilitate or restrict international trade and transportation due to the pandemic. Therefore, regional organizations could constitute an effective forum to promote transparency in international trade decisions in a situation of emergency or disaster.