

GPDRR IV – IGNITE

Tuesday 21 May 2013

11:15 -11:30 AM

CICG, Geneva

Presenter: Mr. Juan Carlos Fallas, Director of National Meteorological Institute (IMN) of with a team from the national agencies (National Commission of Risk Prevention and Emergency Response (CNE), and the Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad (ICE)) and representative from communities from Costa Rica, who supported this project

a) Title: Costa Rica: Building community resilience to floods: A story of cooperation and coordination of national agencies and local communities to strengthen the flood early warning system

b) Short description of the proposed presentation:

In Costa Rica, the Sarapiquí River and several of its tributaries have a long history of recurrent overflows, generally related to the intensity of the rainy season in the Northern Caribbean. Many of the communities were exposed to the river flooding which was being exacerbated by the growing population in the flood prone areas. In 2009 a 6.2 magnitude earthquake and associated landslides in the Cinchona area changed the risk scenario in the basin which made it necessary to identify the new risks and to support the organization of the communities in the areas of potential impact.

The National Meteorological Institute (IMN), the National Commission of Risk Prevention and Emergency Response (CNE), and the Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad (ICE) have combined efforts for the strengthening of early warning system (EWS) of the Sarapiquí basin working with over 50 communities and stakeholders in this region, under a project entitled “Costa Rica Early Warning System for Hydrometeorological Hazards Project”. The project engaged technical support from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and was funded by the World Bank Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction (GFDRR),

This video and oral presentation will demonstrate to the participants an example of good practice of how, community involvement, institutional cooperation at national to local levels, combined with latest technologies for observing, monitoring and forecasting of hazards have lead to a more effective and sustainable early warning system to protect the lives and livelihoods of at risk communities. The presentation will give specific examples of successes and lessons learned through the implementation of the project.

c) Describe why it is important to present this topic at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

This project has facilitated an unprecedented cooperation and coordination engaging the national agencies with local authorities and community stakeholders, involving National Disaster Risk Management, National Meteorological and National Hydrological Agencies of Costa Rica with over 50 Communities in the Sarapiquí River Basin for development of Early Warning Systems for hydro-meteorological Hazards. The great success of this project has been the full engagement and ownership of the communities in the river basin along with institutional coordination and cooperation and support at national to local levels. The warning systems and enhanced community emergency plans and protocols developed through this project were successfully drilled in late February 2013 with full participation of the communities and national agencies.

d) What is innovative about this presentation? A story of successes, empowerment and ownership engaging and leveraging national agencies, local authorities and community stakeholders for development of a sustainable early warning system.