

Para prevención de desastres

Pondrán en cintura a estadios, discotecas y "mall"

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MELANIE RACHEREN

Los grandes supermercados conocidos como Mall San Pedro, el Internacional y el Real Cariari, el igual que el estadio Ricardo Saprissa, son algunas de las edificaciones estudiadas por la Gobernación de San José y el Ministerio de Salud para verificar si cumplen los requisitos en materia de prevención de desastres.

Aunque los resultados preliminares aún se desconocen, el director de la División de Saneamiento Ambiental, Oscar Gamboa, advirtió que podrían ser clausurados si incumplían con los reglamentos vigentes.

La adecuada rotulación de las salidas, la existencia de escapes de emer-

gencia y de alarmas de seguridad son aspectos que analizan los expertos, además de todas las medidas establecidas en el Reglamento de Construcciones del Colegio Federado de Ingenieros y de Arquitectos (CFIA).

Estadios, discotecas y "mall" son considerados edificios de alto riesgo, debido a la gran cantidad de personas que los visitan a diario. De ahí la importancia de los análisis.

La prevención como política

La conmemoración del Día Internacional de Desastres sirvió como marco de referencia para que la cartera de Salud anunciara su nuevo plan de acción: la prevención de las tragedias.

Todos los costarricenses estamos ex-

puestos a peligros, principalmente a inundaciones, deslizamientos, terremotos y huracanes.

Hasta el momento, la institución manejaba estas situaciones atendiendo a los afectados, lo que implicaba un tiempo y un gasto considerable de rehabilitación.

De ahora en adelante se pretende crear una cultura de la prevención, para evitar que el impacto de los desastres sea grande.

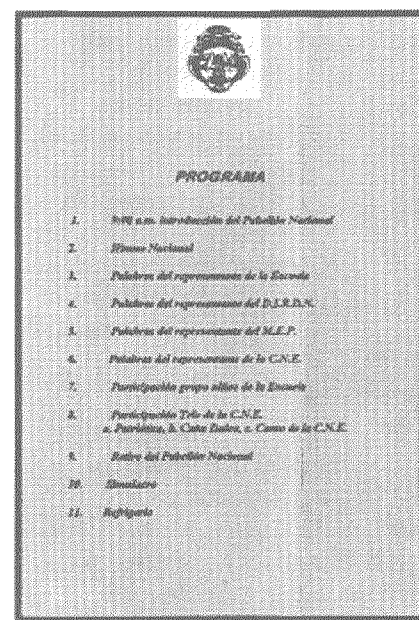
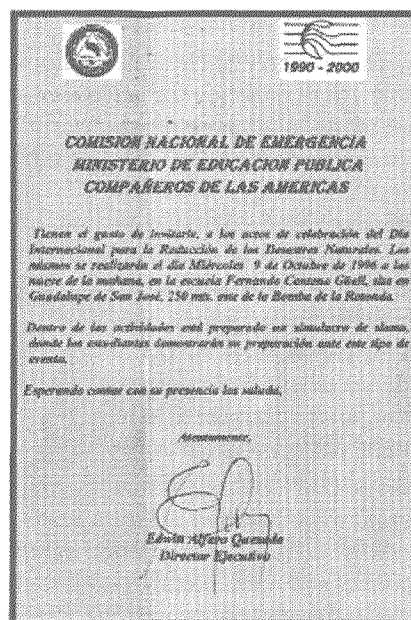
Ruxana Céspedes, coordinadora del Programa de Desastres, hizo un llamado para que la población se integre a los comités locales que maneja la Comisión Nacional de Emergencia, con el propósito de que conozcan cómo actuar en caso de una tragedia.

(Sept). It brought together more than 200 scholars from the region to present case studies, academic research and plans on geological hazards, use of risk information in city planning, emergency planning and urban and environmental risks. Round tables were organized on both "Cities at Risk" theme and the role of women (building on 1995 campaign). A conclusion was that academics and researchers must improve communication and involvement with planners and policy makers.

Capital Cities of Ibero-America organized a seminar on "The Role of Local Governments in Disaster Prevention and Mitigation" with the Municipality of San José in April 1996. Government decision-makers and

engineers from Spain and ten Latin American countries participated in the meeting. The IDNDR regional office presented Cities at Risk issues. Participants agreed to encourage policy adoption for cities at risk in their municipalities.

The National Emergency Commission (National Committee), Ministry of Public Education and NGO "Partners of the Americas" celebrated World Disaster Reduction Day in San José with presentations at a large school for handicapped children. The French member of the IDNDR Scientific and Technical Committee also attended. Afterwards, students carried out an earthquake simulation exercise.



Congo

AVICANAT, (Association of Natural Disaster Victims), an NGO based in the capital city of Kinshasa, carried out a range of activities for the World Disaster Reduction Campaign.

A peaceful march of 500 disaster victims planned for World Disaster Reduction Day was cancelled due to political insecurity, but over 50 disaster victims from cities in Zaire went to the office of the Prime Minister of the government in transition on World Disaster Reduction Day, to present a memorandum on natural disaster prevention.

Despite initial government laws, budget allocations and plans following the 1990 disasters, noted the memorandum, there are still rivers crossing some quarters of Kinshasa, Zaire's capital, that are in a "wild natural state" and are likely to trigger severe floods again, affecting more residents in the city. Among the memorandum's recommendations are to reinforce key bridges and construct dikes, provide partial assistance for victims, and establish a government office in the Social Affairs Ministry to collect reactions and information from disaster victims.

9 October was also selected as the day to formally sign an accord at the UN Information Centre in Kinshasa, between AVICANAT and the Advanced Institute of Applied Techniques. AVICANAT and the Institute met a few months before at a local event for the 1996 World Meteorological Day, and developed close working ties. The accord specifies joint action within the IDNDR framework and as their contribution to IDNDR.

The ceremony was attended by over 100 people. Films were shown of natural disasters around the world.

During the meeting, AVICANAT officials spoke on "Kinshasa, City at Risk", focusing on local vulnerability to floods and erosion, and urging communities to take preventive action.

AVICANAT formally closed the campaign by organizing a day of reflection for women from different social strata, who had in common that they were victims of floods in 1981, 1985 and

1990 (Kinsuka-Pompage, west of Kinshasa, 14 December). They focused on the role of women in developing strategies for prevention, preparedness, early warning, and relief. Each time there are heavy rains, there are floods: two rivers meet a few meters from a major bridge, before joining the River Zaire two kilometers away.

World Disaster Reduction Day events were widely reported by national radio and television in French and local languages. Radio France International also reported on the events.

AVICANAT members reported that the 1996 World Disaster Reduction Day was a turning point for the organization, providing the occasion to become a future-oriented, efficient vehicle to sensitize the public and promote awareness about natural disasters and their effects in the country. Previously it had focused primarily on the effects of the 1990 floods disaster, as they had formed following those floods.

As part of World Disaster Reduction Day events, AVICANAT announced an ambitious 1997-2000 programme "to build a culture of prevention and national solidarity in Zaire". They noted special appreciation for IDNDR Secretariat efforts in providing information and t-shirts (for participation in the 1995-96 Community Map Contest).

Ecuador

On World Disaster Reduction Day, the National Department for Civil Defense (IDNDR

