

Foreword

Civil protection plays a key role in ensuring the safety and well-being of citizens and in building economic and social resilience to disasters. Good civil protection can literally make the difference between lives saved or lost, and in the time it takes for society and the economy to recover after major events. Mexico, a country exposed to frequent tropical storms, powerful earthquakes and devastating floods, has been a frontrunner in this area. The National Civil Protection System is a core public service which relies on a unique mix of institutional capacities and the co-ordination of resources at all levels of government.

This *Review of the Mexican National Civil Protection System* is the first country review under the newly established OECD High-Level Risk Forum. The report offers a unique review and analysis of the system since its inception in 1986. It provides evidence-based policy advice on how to move risk management policy forward, and highlights priority areas to translate objectives into action, prevention in particular. It builds on a thorough process of policy dialogue with Mexican stakeholders drawing on state-of-the-art expertise from other countries exposed to disasters, including Chile, Italy and the United States.

According to the review, the Mexican National Civil Protection System has made much progress over the years. Although extreme events continue to disrupt economic activities, they now result in relatively few human casualties. This, in itself, is an impressive sign of Mexico's progress, reflecting both technological advancements, such as sophisticated early warning systems and modern building codes, and the wide sharing of a culture of safety. Mexico has also established itself as one of the leading countries in the financial management of disasters, through the Fund for Natural Disasters (FONDEN) and the Fund for the Prevention of Natural Disasters (FOPREDEN).

Despite progress, our study underlines that improving prevention policy should remain a priority. Improper land use and territorial and urban planning contribute heavily to the vulnerability of Mexico's population and economy to natural hazards. These issues need to be addressed in a broader framework for prevention to contribute to sustainable long-term economic development, while at the same time addressing the most pressing policy challenge for disaster risk reduction.

Risk management policy is about leadership and governance. The OECD *Review of the Mexican National Civil Protection System* can help build further momentum for policy implementation as a new General Law for Civil Protection was recently passed. Maintaining engagement with citizens and businesses will be essential. Further international co-operation, an area where Mexico has demonstrated that it can take the lead, will also be fundamental to sharing lessons and pooling best practices.

This report highlights a number of options that the current administration may wish to consider for setting up an ambitious, cohesive and inclusive strategy for risk management for civil protection. The OECD stands ready to continue to support Mexico in this important policy area for promoting better policies for better lives.



Angel Gurría
Secretary-General

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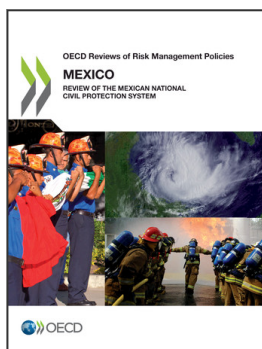
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