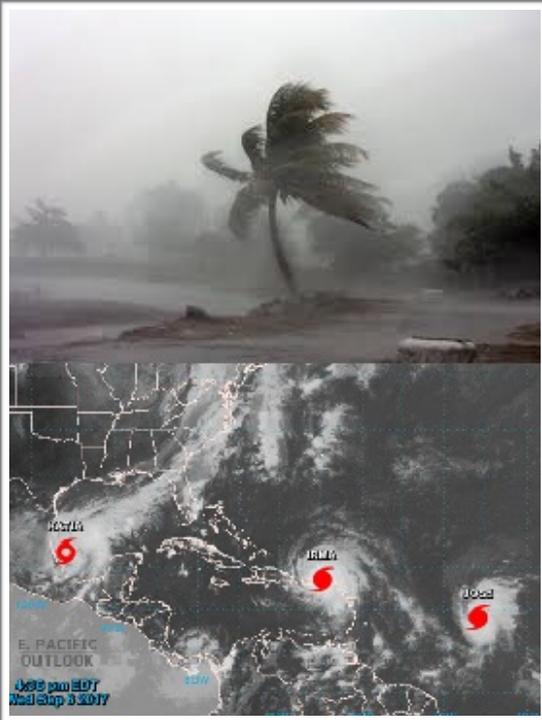


EARTHQUAKES: MEXICO IS MOVING



From September 1 to September 3, tropical storm Lidia tested the mettle of Baja California State. Then, on September 8, Hurricane Katia hit Tampico and Veracruz, followed by Max on September 14, striking Guerrero and Michoacán. Mexico valiantly was resilient to these phenomena, which fortunately caused little serious damage.

On September 7, 2017, the most intense earthquake ever recorded over the past 100 years in Mexico, with a magnitude of 8.2 on the Richter scale, spread throughout the entire region from its epicenter on the Chiapas coast. Although its radius was 1,300 km, the harshest impact was felt on Oaxaca and Chiapas.

A few days later, I visited Juchitán with representatives from the private and public sector. The President of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto, was there with Luis Felipe Puente, head of the National Civil Protection Coordination Unit and Rosario Robles, the Secretary of Land and Urban Development (SEDATU), among others. We observed countless damaged and destroyed buildings and listened to the first-hand accounts from many of the people who described what they experienced and the devastating consequences of this disaster.

The government estimated that over 150,000 houses were severely damaged. The great majorities of these structures were built prior to the current building codes and were never reinforced.



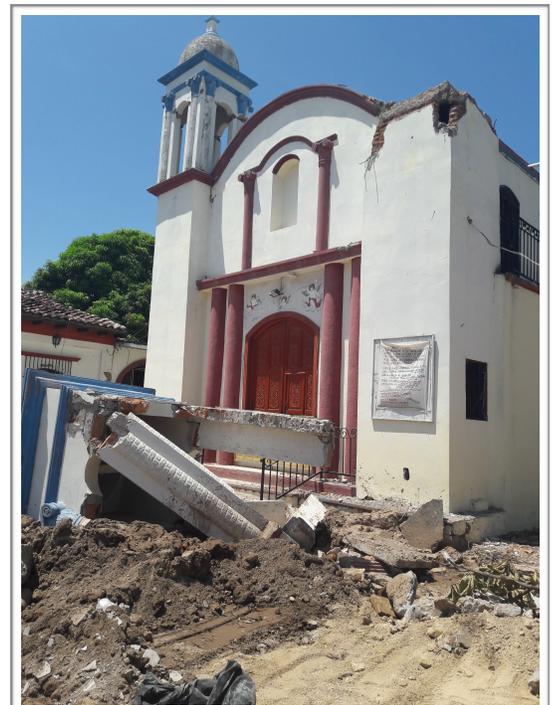
Dr. Carlos Valdez, Director of the National Center for Prevention of Disasters, (CENAPRED), explained that the September 7th earthquake generated over 5,000 aftershocks in less than a month, and that it was caused by a fracture in the Cocos tectonic plate. Subsequently, on September 19 at 1:30 p.m. a different fracture on the same plate produced a 7.1 Richter scale earthquake, whose epicenter, between the states of Morelos and Puebla, was 120 km away from Mexico City.



I happened to be out of the country and upon my return; I came upon an emergency situation. It was a déjà vu sensation because on September 19, 32 years ago, Mexico experienced a similar earthquake. When it occurred, I was in Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán, and when I returned to the capital, I encountered a tragedy of catastrophic proportions.

In contrast to this recent earthquake, thousands of people perished. It was at this moment when Mexico displayed an unprecedented show of solidarity and a forceful civic presence. It was also at this time that the National Civil Protection Coordination Unit was established and the existing construction regulations were revised and updated.

It is difficult to compare the consequences of both earthquakes in Mexico City, because the intensity of the 2017 earthquake was lower than the 1985 earthquake. However, we must point out that in 1985 more than 2,000 buildings collapsed, and that there were nearly 5,000 buildings with





structural damages, whereas during the September 19, 2017 earthquake approximately 40 buildings collapsed and there were 360 structurally damaged buildings.

There is nothing we can do to prevent earthquakes, and we know they will continue, since Mexico is located in a region with five tectonic plates. However, we can effect changes in

those disaster-related systems that do not work or create new and better systems. There are already some people thinking in these terms, but in the meantime the people who lost their homes in so many communities require concrete actions.

There are many ways to help by joining transparent, reliable organizations that ensure that the much-needed assistance is indeed provided to those victims. One of these organizations, to which I belong, is CENACED, the National Support Center for Epidemiological Contingencies and Disasters, also known as the “Unidos por Ellos” network. This organization consists of corporations and NGO’s, who over the past 20 years have built 6,700 housing units in Mexico and 2,000 abroad, refurbished 300 schools and provided approximately 40,000 tons of food.

In response to this earthquake, CENACED established several committees in charge of one particular sector: volunteers, communications, donations, collection and construction. The latter will be devoted to building resilient housing with the donations sent by corporate executives as well as by people all over the world. As befits a non-profit organization such as ours, 100 percent of these funds are exclusively used for construction purposes.

I conclude these reflections with a quote from my friend Alfredo Achar: **“We must never rest as long as there is someone who needs us and we must not stop until we become a more equitable, just nation.”**

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