

LOGISTICS SECTOR UPDATE – APRIL 2007

SECTOR OVERVIEW

USAID/OFDA is at the forefront of the U.S. Government's planning and implementation of the logistics of responding to disasters, including airlifts, sealifts, and the procurement of emergency relief supplies. USAID/OFDA maintains three disaster response commodity stockpiles located in Miami, Florida; Pisa, Italy; and Dubai, United Arab Emirates. These warehouses store humanitarian relief commodities, including blankets, plastic sheeting, water containers, water purification units, hygiene kits, inflatable boats, and generators. Logistics and procurement systems ensure that vital emergency relief supplies and services efficiently reach those in need.



Earthquake-affected Pakistanis receive assistance from USAID/OFDA. (GOAL)

USAID/OFDA staffs a Logistics Unit to respond rapidly to emerging needs following a disaster. During peak operational response times, USAID/OFDA calls on additional logistics staff, who have received USAID/OFDA training. Such staff include technical specialists who provide internal surge capacity, the U.S. Forest Service's Disaster Assistance Support Program, and the Fairfax County and Los Angeles County Urban Search and Rescue teams. In response to a disaster, USAID/OFDA logistics officers in Washington, D.C. coordinate the delivery of relief supplies from regional warehouses, while logistics personnel in the field ensure that the supplies reach implementing partners for distribution to affected populations. In the event of a slow-onset disaster, USAID/OFDA may preposition personnel and relief supplies in order to provide assistance to affected communities as needs arise.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2006, USAID/OFDA provided approximately \$73 million for logistics and humanitarian relief supplies, including in response to complex emergencies in Lebanon and Sudan and natural disasters in Pakistan and Honduras. As of April 2007, USAID/OFDA has supported logistics activities in Bolivia, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Indonesia, Madagascar, Somalia, and Sri Lanka.

PARTNERING WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE IN BOLIVIA

Natural disasters and complex emergencies often produce critical logistical challenges that can hinder the delivery of relief supplies. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), at times, provides support to USAID/OFDA to jointly overcome logistical obstacles. DOD directs the use of military assets, including personnel, supplies, and equipment, for humanitarian assistance overseas.

Heavy rains beginning in December 2006 caused major rivers to overflow in Bolivia, affecting nearly 450,000 people. In response to the flooding, USAID/OFDA and DOD supported three airlifts of humanitarian commodities from the USAID/OFDA stockpile in Miami to flood-affected communities in Santa Cruz and Beni departments. The airlifts contained a total of 7,800 water containers, 7,336 hygiene kits, and 290 rolls of plastic sheeting from USAID/OFDA, as well as four water pumps from DOD. USAID/OFDA arranged aircraft transportation for two of the airlifts while DOD provided transportation for the third. In addition, USAID/OFDA's Logistics Unit coordinated the delivery of two U.N. World Health Organization standard medical kits to Bolivia aboard a commercial aircraft, providing medical supplies to treat approximately 20,000 people for

three months. DOD's contributions to logistics and relief commodities enhanced USAID/OFDA's robust response to widespread flooding in Bolivia.

SUPPORTING DISPLACED FAMILIES IN CAR AND CHAD

When planning the logistics of disaster response, USAID/OFDA must consider the unique conditions and capacity of each airport facility, including available offloading equipment. While USAID/OFDA uses a variety of aircrafts in humanitarian relief operations, the majority of flights to Africa are arranged on cargo planes, such as the Antonov 12 and the Illuysian 76 (IL76). These planes are designed with the capability to load and unload cargo from the rear of the aircraft, without specialized offloading equipment, directly onto commercial trucks.



An IL76 plane, sponsored by USAID/OFDA, delivers relief supplies in Chad. (Dave Lillie, USAID)

In response to increasing internal displacement in CAR and Chad, USAID/OFDA coordinated airlifts to both countries to deliver relief commodities, specifically using IL76 aircrafts due to limited offloading capability at the two destination airports. Both airlifts delivered relief supplies from USAID/OFDA's Dubai warehouse in February 2007; one aircraft disembarked in Bangui, CAR, and the other in Abeche, Chad. The two IL76 charter planes each carried a shipment of 6,675 blankets, 334 rolls of plastic sheeting, and 6,700 water containers, assisting approximately 20,000 people in CAR and 20,000 others in Chad. Due to the poor quality and insecurity of road conditions in both CAR and Chad, USAID/OFDA-sponsored airlifts serve as a valuable link in the pipeline of delivering relief supplies to affected communities in more remote locations.

LOGISTICAL CHALLENGES OF TRANSPORTING HUMANITARIAN SUPPLIES IN SUDAN

Throughout Sudan, USAID/OFDA-funded logistics programs support the transport of cargo and relief workers, forming the backbone of the world's largest humanitarian operation. In FY 2006, USAID/OFDA contributed more than \$13 million for logistics programs in Sudan, where humanitarian organizations serve 5.5 million people affected by conflict.

When newly displaced families arrive at camps in the Darfur region of western Sudan, humanitarian agencies provide blankets, plastic sheeting, sleeping mats, water containers, clothing, and other humanitarian items to offer critical support. With co-funding and support from USAID/OFDA, the U.N. developed the Common Pipeline to procure, transport, store, and deliver relief goods in Darfur. In addition, since 2004, USAID/OFDA has contributed more than \$21 million to support the U.N. World Food Program's Humanitarian Air Service in Sudan. From Khartoum, humanitarian workers and cargo travel to 20 locations in Sudan on regularly scheduled flights, reaching affected populations in remote areas that are generally inaccessible by land travel. USAID/OFDA's funding for these essential logistics activities remains an integral component of the international response to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Sudan.

USAID/OFDA PARTICIPATION IN THE FLEET FORUM

Efficient humanitarian transport capacity remains a fundamental building block of all disaster response mechanisms. USAID/OFDA participates in the Fleet Forum, an informal voluntary association of more than 40 humanitarian agencies working together to build humanitarian transport capability. The Fleet Forum addresses logistics issues such as safety and security, the leasing of vehicles to diminish costs and enhance efficiency, and initiatives to solidify and mainstream best practices. Working closely with participating agencies of the Fleet Forum, USAID/OFDA maintains a supporting role in professionalizing vehicle fleet management and strengthening humanitarian transport capacity.