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U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)

Central America and Mexico – Floods

Fact Sheet #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2006

October 12, 2005

BACKGROUND

- On October 4, Hurricane Stan made landfall south of Veracruz, Mexico, bringing sustained winds of 80 miles per hour before weakening to a tropical storm and generating separate storms across southern Mexico and Central America. The heavy rainfall associated with these storms caused widespread and severe flooding that has affected millions of people across Central America, including in Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico, and Costa Rica.
- As of October 12, the floods have killed an estimated 2,000 people across Central America and Mexico, according to government reports. These numbers continue to rise as communication and access to isolated areas improves.
- In addition, the Santa Ana (Iamatepec) volcano in northwestern El Salvador erupted on October 1, spewing hot rocks and plumes of ash 15 kilometers (km) into the air, forcing the evacuation of 7,000 local residents and resulting in two deaths.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE		SOURCE
Guatemala	654 dead, 577 missing, 3.5 million affected, 120,000 in shelters	Government of Guatemala ¹ - October 12
El Salvador	69 dead 40,000 in shelters	OCHA ² – October 11
Mexico	15 dead 1.9 million affected, 370,069 evacuated	Government of Mexico – October 11
Costa Rica	459 communities affected, 1,074 evacuated	Government of Costa Rica ³ – October 6

Total FY 2006 USAID/OFDA Assistance to Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Mexico\$2,059,933

CURRENT SITUATION

Regional

- A large and nearly stationary low pressure system over the western Atlantic and Caribbean continues to bring significant rainfall over the Caribbean. USAID/OFDA is closely monitoring this weather system and the possibility of additional rainfall over flooded areas in Central America.

Guatemala

- Heavy rains have produced more than 900 landslides, burying entire villages and causing numerous deaths. As of October 12, the Government of Guatemala’s National Council for Disaster Reduction (CONRED) confirmed 654 deaths, 577 people missing, and more than 120,000 people affected across 621 communities in the provinces of Escuintla, Guatemala, Quetzaltenango, Chiquimula, San Marcos, Chimaltenango, El Quiché, and Baja Verapa. Poor and marginalized groups—particularly indigenous women and children—that typically lack access to basic services are especially vulnerable to the disaster’s impacts.
- Currently, a four-person USAID/OFDA team deployed from the USAID/OFDA regional office for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in San Jose, Costa Rica, is on the ground in Guatemala. The team is working with USAID/Guatemala, local disaster officials, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to assess impacts, identify needs, and deliver emergency assistance. Two additional team members, including a military liaison officer, will be on the ground on October 13.
- The USAID/OFDA/LAC assessment team reports that top sectoral priorities are health, water and sanitation, and shelter.
- According to OCHA, the flooding and landslides have damaged housing and public infrastructure in 251 of the country’s 331 municipalities. Additional rain across much of Guatemala has hampered ongoing relief efforts.
- On October 10, the U.N. issued a joint flash appeal for \$21.6 million, highlighting needs in the areas of food, water, temporary shelter, bedding, essential medicines, and hygiene and sanitation facilities, as well as repair of public infrastructure.

¹ Government of Guatemala’s National Council for Disaster Reduction (CONRED)

² U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

³ The Government of Costa Rica’s National Commission for the Prevention of Risks and Attention to Emergencies

El Salvador

- Two simultaneous emergencies—the severe flooding caused by Tropical Storm Stan and the eruption of the Santa Ana volcano—have affected half of the country and forced the evacuation of more than 69,000 people to local shelters. Damage to housing and public infrastructure from the flooding has been particularly severe in the departments of San Miguel and Usulután in southern El Salvador, as well as in the northern departments of San Salvador and Sansonate.
- According to USAID/OFDA, by Oct 12 the numbers of people in shelters had decreased to below 40,000 and continues to decline.
- As of October 11, OCHA reported 69 confirmed deaths attributed to flood-related events, primarily mudslides.
- On October 3, a two-person USAID/OFDA team led by the Senior Regional Advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean traveled to areas affected by the flooding in the departments of Sonsonate, La Libertad, San Salvador, Santa Ana, La Paz, and Usulután. A USAID/OFDA/LAC consultant remains in country and continues to assess needs and coordinate with local partners.
- On October 6, the U.N. issued a joint appeal for \$7.8 million to meet emergency needs across a range of affected sectors, including water and sanitation, food, health, shelter, medicine, and logistical support. The same day, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies issued a flash appeal for \$379,798 to meet urgent food and emergency relief needs of 21,000 beneficiaries.

Mexico

- Flooding in the states of Veracruz, Chiapas, Oaxaca, Tabasco, Puebla, Hidalgo, and Guerrero forced the evacuation of approximately 370,000 people from nearly 3,000 communities to local shelters, according to the Government of Mexico on October 11.
- A USAID/OFDA consultant based in Mexico continues to conduct damage assessments and coordinate with local disaster officials, in consultation with USAID/Mexico.

Costa Rica

- Extensive rainfall in the provinces of Alajuela, Cartago, Guanacaste, Heredia, Puntarenas, and San Jose in the Pacific and Central Valley caused severe flooding and landslides, forcing more than 1,000 people in 459 communities to evacuate to local shelters.
- The Government of the Republic of Costa Rica's National Commission for the Prevention of Risks and Attention to Emergencies (CNE) established temporary shelters in accessible areas and airlifted food and emergency relief supplies to isolated areas.
- As of October 6, 550 houses, 117 bridges, and 11 educational buildings were reported damaged, and more than 281 roads were blocked or damaged by mud accumulation, according to CNE.

USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Guatemala

- On October 5, U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala James M. Derham issued a disaster declaration due to the magnitude of the damage caused by the flooding and landslides. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$150,000 to USAID/Guatemala for the local purchase and distribution of emergency relief supplies, as well as for helicopter support, including fuel and rental of local helicopters.
- On October 12, USAID/OFDA provided an additional \$1,200,000 to USAID/Guatemala for emergency grants to NGO partners for emergency health, water and sanitation, and shelter activities.
- On October 12, USAID/OFDA committed \$200,000 to support the Pan American Health Organization's (PAHO) emergency health and water and sanitation activities as part of the U.N. joint appeal.
- Through two airlifts on October 7 and 8, USAID/OFDA provided emergency relief supplies, including 5,004 hygiene kits, 200 rolls of plastic sheeting, and 5,000 blankets, valued at a total of \$159,933 including transport. An additional airlift containing plastic sheeting, water bladders, water containers, hygiene kits, and a water purification unit is scheduled to arrive in the coming days. USAID/OFDA and USAID/Guatemala are coordinating closely with CONRED to transport and distribute relief commodities to affected communities.

El Salvador

- On October 4, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires to El Salvador Michael A. Butler issued a disaster declaration due to the effects of the flooding and volcanic eruption. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$100,000 through USAID/El Salvador to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) for the local purchase and distribution of emergency relief commodities, including sleeping mats, blankets, and hygiene kits, to affected families. Additionally, USAID/OFDA donated 85 rolls of plastic sheeting previously stockpiled in country for distribution by CARE and the Government of El Salvador.
- On October 12, USAID/OFDA provided \$100,000 to support PAHO activities in the emergency health, water and sanitation sectors as part of the U.N. joint appeal.

Mexico

- On October 6, U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Antonio O. Garza Jr. declared a disaster due to the flooding. In response, USAID/OFDA provided a total of \$100,000 through USAID/Mexico to the Mexican Red Cross for the local purchase and distribution of emergency relief supplies.

Costa Rica

- On September 30, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Russell L. Frisbie declared a disaster due to the magnitude of the impacts of the flooding. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$50,000 to CNE for the local purchase of relief supplies, water, and food.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE*Guatemala*

- On October 8, the U.S. Army's Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) deployed a 58-person team from Joint Task Force-Bravo in Honduras to Guatemala City. The team, consisting of medical and logistics personnel, is assisting with ongoing disaster relief efforts in southwestern Guatemala.
- Nine U.S. Army helicopters are conducting search and rescue missions and transporting emergency relief supplies. To date, the team has delivered over 37,000 pounds of food, medical supplies, and communications equipment to affected areas, as well as flying in 39 host nation firefighters, emergency aid workers, and doctors.

USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO GUATEMALA

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE¹			
USAID/Guatemala	Air Support, Emergency Relief Supplies	Affected Areas	\$150,000
USAID/Guatemala	Emergency Grants to NGOs for Relief Activities	Affected Areas	\$1,200,000
PAHO Appeal	Emergency Health, Water and Sanitation	Affected Areas	\$200,000
USAID/Guatemala, NGOs	Emergency Relief Supplies	Affected Areas	\$121,274
USAID/Guatemala, NGOs	Emergency Relief Supplies (en route)	Affected Areas	TBD
	Air Transport of Emergency Relief Supplies	Affected Areas	\$38,659
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$1,709,933
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO GUATEMALA IN FY 2006			\$1,709,933

¹ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of October 12, 2005.

USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE¹			
CRS (flood response)	Emergency Relief Supplies	Affected Areas	\$75,000
CRS (volcano response)	Emergency Relief Supplies	Affected Areas	\$25,000
PAHO Appeal	Emergency Health, Water and Sanitation	Affected Areas	\$100,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$200,000
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR IN FY 2006			\$200,000

² USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of October 12, 2005.

USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO MEXICO

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE¹			
Mexican Red Cross	Local Purchase of Emergency Relief Supplies, Water, and Food	Affected Areas	\$100,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$100,000
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO MEXICO IN FY 2006			\$100,000

³ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of October 12, 2005.

USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO COSTA RICA

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE⁴			
CNE	Emergency Relief Supplies, Water, and Food	Affected Areas	\$50,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$50,000

⁴USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of October 12, 2005.

TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO IN FY 2006	\$2,059,933
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PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations.
- USAID encourages cash donations because they: allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, warehouse space, etc); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information on making donations and volunteering can be found at:
 - USAID: www.usaid.gov – Keyword: Donations
 - The Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org or (703) 276-1914
- Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.org.