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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 #4, Fiscal Year (FY) 2006

October 21, 2005

### BACKGROUND

- On October 4, Hurricane Stan made landfall south of Veracruz, Mexico, with 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.
- The floods have killed hundreds of people across Central America and Mexico, and death toll figures continue to rise as communication and access to isolated areas improve.
- 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
<b>Guatemala</b>	669 dead, 70,161 in shelters, 441,431 directly affected and/or displaced Government of Guatemala <sup>1</sup> - October 20
<b>El Salvador</b>	69 dead 26,000 in shelters Government of El Salvador – October 13 National Emergency Committee (COEN) – October 18
<b>Mexico</b>	15 dead 1.9 million affected, 370,069 evacuated Government of Mexico – October 11
<b>Costa Rica</b>	459 communities affected, 1,074 evacuated Government of Costa Rica <sup>2</sup> – October 6

**Total FY 2006 USAID/OFDA Assistance to Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Mexico ..... \$4,400,345**

**Total FY 2006 USAID Humanitarian Assistance to Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Mexico ... \$7,415,745**

### CURRENT SITUATION

#### USAID/OFDA Team Deployment

- Currently, a five-person USAID/OFDA team remains on the ground in Guatemala, working with USAID/Guatemala, local disaster officials, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to assess impacts, identify needs, and deliver emergency assistance.

#### Regional

- Hurricane Wilma is presently approaching Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, with sustained winds of 145 miles per hour. According to the U.S. National Hurricane Center (NHC), coastal storm surge flooding of 7 to 11 feet above normal tide is expected in areas of the Yucatan Peninsula. In addition, Wilma is forecasted to produce 10 to 20 inches of across portions of the Yucatan Peninsula and western Cuba.
- Two USAID/OFDA consultants are on the ground—one in Mexico and one in Honduras—monitoring the situation and coordinating with local officials in the event that assistance is required.
- A USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor and consultant are expected to pre-deploy to the Bahamas in coming days.

#### Guatemala

- On October 18, the Government of Guatemala's National Council for Disaster Reduction (CONRED) determined that the human and material devastation caused by Tropical Storm Stan has exceeded the impact of Hurricane Mitch in 1998, previously considered the worst storm to strike Central America in a century. According to CONRED, Hurricane Mitch caused 268 deaths; directly affected 110,758 people; destroyed 2,294 homes; damaged 19,460 homes; and directly affected 475 communities. By contrast, CONRED reported on October 20 that Tropical Storm Stan caused 669 confirmed deaths; directly affected 441,431 people; destroyed 8,937 homes; damaged 25,256 homes; and directly affected 1,063 communities.
- As displaced residents moved in with relatives and repaired damaged homes, the number of people in local shelters decreased significantly from more than 120,000 on October 13 to 59,478 on October 20. Currently, 504 shelters serve residents from 1,063 communities.

<sup>1</sup> Government of Guatemala's National Council for Disaster Reduction (CONRED)

<sup>2</sup> Government of Costa Rica's National Commission for the Prevention of Risks and Attention to Emergencies (CNE)

- On October 19, a USAID/OFDA Military Liaison Officer participated in a U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) ground assessment of two major highways and connecting roads in the western departments of Sololá and Suchitepéquez. The team reported that all roads were passable to vehicular traffic via secondary roads or temporary bridges. Fuel trucks were present in all locations and gas stations were operating without delays. In addition, the team observed fresh produce available in local markets and transported across major roads. Along the highway, the team reported road crews actively clearing ditches and cutting grass.

*El Salvador*

- Two simultaneous emergencies—the severe flooding caused by Tropical Storm Stan and the eruption of the Santa Ana volcano—caused 69 deaths and affected roughly half of the country. Flood damage to housing and public infrastructure was particularly severe in the departments of San Miguel and Usulután in southern El Salvador, and San Salvador and Sansonate in northern El Salvador.
- The combined emergencies forced the evacuation of more than 69,000 people to local shelters. As of October 18, COEN indicated that approximately 26,000 people remained in shelters; however, the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) forecasted that the number would quickly decline and stabilize at 12,000 people within 7 to 10 days.

*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. The flooding caused 15 deaths and affected approximately 1.5 million people.
- As Hurricane Wilma approached the Mexican coast on October 20, local authorities declared a state of emergency in 26 municipalities in Quintana Roo and Yucatan states and began evacuating high risk areas, including the islands of Cozumel, Mujeres, and Holbox, as well as parts of the Yucatan coastline. A USAID/OFDA consultant in Mexico reported that as of October 20, the Government of Mexico (GOM) had established approximately 2,200 temporary shelters in the two states and that more than 40,000 individuals had been evacuated. The GOM has dispatched emergency personnel and equipment to the region, including medical supplies, electrical generators, and water purification plants and pumps.

*Costa Rica*

- Extensive rainfall in the provinces of Alajuela, Cartago, Guanacaste, Heredia, Puntarenas, and San José 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. According to CNE, 550 houses, 117 bridges, and 11 educational buildings were reported damaged and more than 281 roads were blocked or damaged by mud accumulation.

**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. Purchased relief commodities included 3,700 foam mattresses; 3,700 blankets; 10,000 1-liter bottles of water; 100 sacks of beans; 500 sacks of rice; 10,000 500-milliliter containers of cooking oil; and 11,200 gallons of fuel.
- Through airlifts on October 7, 8, and 13, USAID/OFDA provided the following emergency relief supplies: 5,004 hygiene kits; 1,000 rolls of plastic sheeting; 5,000 blankets; 2,502 hygiene kits; 9,200 5-gallon water containers; 1,120 water containers with a 10 liter capacity; 6 water bladders with a 12,000 liter capacity; and 2 water treatment units. The total value of these commodities, including transport, is \$600,345.
- USAID/OFDA has provided a total of \$3 million 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 Flash Appeal.
- USAID's Office of Food for Peace (FFP) pledged approximately \$2 million in emergency food assistance to support WFP's emergency operations in Guatemala.

*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. USAID/OFDA also 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 committed \$100,000 to support PAHO activities in the emergency health, water and sanitation sectors as part of the U.N. joint appeal.

- On October 19, USAID/El Salvador pledged \$1 million to support the recovery phase and priority activities to be agreed upon with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. USAID/El Salvador also provided COEN with 55 boxes of plastic sheeting for the construction of temporary shelters, valued more than \$15,000.

*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 \$100,000 through USAID/Mexico to the Mexican Red Cross for the local purchase and distribution of emergency relief supplies.
- On October 20, USAID/OFDA provided an additional \$100,000 through USAID/Mexico to the Nature Conservancy for the purchase and distribution of emergency relief supplies to affected communities.

*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.

**USG 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. As of October 17, SOUTHCOM had delivered over 360,950 pounds of food, medical supplies, and communications equipment to affected areas, and the team had flown in 200 host nation firefighters, emergency aid workers, and doctors.
- SOUTHCOM is providing 120,000 gallons of aviation fuel, valued at \$500,000, for the Guatemalan Air Force to assist with search and rescue missions and the transport of emergency relief supplies.
- On October 17, a scientist from the U.S. Geological Survey's Volcano Disaster Assistance Program (USGS/VDAP) traveled to El Salvador to assess volcanic activity and damage following the eruption of Ilamatepec. USGS/VDAP provided approximately \$12,000 of monitoring equipment to the local *Servicio Nacional de Estudios Territoriales* (National Service of Land Studies or SNET) for monitoring of continued volcanic seismic activity in the region.

**USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO GUATEMALA**

<b>USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE<sup>1</sup></b>			
USAID/Guatemala	Air Support, Emergency Relief Supplies	Affected Areas	\$150,000
USAID/Guatemala	Emergency Grants to NGOs for Relief Activities	Affected Areas	\$3,000,000
USAID/Guatemala, NGOs	Emergency Relief Supplies	Affected Areas	\$121,274
USAID/Guatemala, NGOs	Emergency Relief Supplies en route	Affected Areas	\$359,712
PAHO Appeal	Emergency Health, Water and Sanitation	Affected Areas	\$200,000
	Air Transport of Emergency Relief Supplies	Affected Areas	\$119,359
<b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA</b>			<b>\$3,950,345</b>
<b>USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE</b>			
WFP	Emergency Food Assistance	Affected Areas	\$2,000,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/FFP</b>			<b>\$2,000,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO GUATEMALA IN FY 2006</b>			<b>\$5,950,345</b>

<sup>1</sup>USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of October 21, 2005.

**USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR**

<b>USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE<sup>1</sup></b>			
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
<b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA</b>			<b>\$200,000</b>
<b>USAID/EL SALVADOR ASSISTANCE</b>			
COEN	Emergency Relief Supplies	Affected Areas	\$15,400
TBD	Disaster Recovery Activities	Affected Areas	\$1,000,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/EL SALVADOR</b>			<b>\$1,015,400</b>
<b>TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR IN FY 2006</b>			<b>\$1,215,400</b>

<sup>2</sup> USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of October 21, 2005.

#### USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO MEXICO

<b>USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE<sup>1</sup></b>			
Mexican Red Cross	Local Purchase of Emergency Relief Supplies, Water, and Food	Affected Areas	\$100,000
Nature Conservancy	Purchase and Distribution of Emergency Relief Supplies	Affected Areas	\$100,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA</b>			<b>\$200,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO MEXICO IN FY 2006</b>			<b>\$200,000</b>

<sup>3</sup> USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of October 21, 2005.

#### USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO COSTA RICA

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<b>USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE<sup>1</sup></b>			
CNE	Emergency Relief Supplies, Water, and Food	Affected Areas	\$50,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA</b>			<b>\$50,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO COSTA RICA IN FY 2006</b>			<b>\$50,000</b>

<sup>4</sup> USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of October 21, 2005.

<b>TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO GUATEMALA, EL SALVADOR, COSTA RICA AND MEXICO IN FY 2006</b>	<b>\$7,415,745</b>
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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](http://www.usaid.gov) – Keyword: Donations
  - The Center for International Disaster Information: [www.cidi.org](http://www.cidi.org) or (703) 276-1914
- Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [www.reliefweb.org](http://www.reliefweb.org).