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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 #3, Fiscal Year (FY) 2006

October 18, 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
Guatemala	664 dead, 108,183 in shelters, 390,187 directly affected and/or displaced, 3.5 million affected Government of Guatemala ¹ - October 18
El Salvador	69 dead 36,154 in shelters Government of El Salvador – October 13 National Emergency Committee (COEN) – October 17
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 ² – October 6

Total FY 2006 USAID/OFDA Assistance to Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Mexico\$2,500,345

CURRENT SITUATION

USAID/OFDA Team Deployment

- Currently, a six-person USAID/OFDA team is 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. The USAID/OFDA team reports that top sectoral priorities are health, water and sanitation, and shelter.

Guatemala

- As of October 18, the Government of Guatemala's (GOG) National Council for Disaster Reduction (CONRED) reported 664 confirmed deaths, 108,183 in a total of 647 shelters, and 390,187 displaced or directly affected. The official death toll is projected to rise, with improved access to remote villages cut off by mudslides.
- According to CONRED, the most affected departments are San Marcos, Escuintla, Quetzaltenango, Sololá, Huehuetenango, Quiché, Retalhuleu, Chimaltenango, Suchitepéquez, Santa Rosa, Totonicapán, Jutiapa, Guatemala, Sacatepéquez, and Jalapa. Approximately 33,100 homes have been damaged or destroyed, 19 municipalities left without potable water, and 10 municipalities left without functioning sanitation systems.
- On October 15 and 16, joint assessment teams that comprised representatives of USAID/OFDA, USAID/Guatemala, the U.S. Embassy, the GOG, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), and NGO partners conducted multiple overflight assessments of highland municipalities in the departments of San Marcos, Sololá, Quetzaltenango, and Huehuetenango.
- The assessment team reported that San Marcos Department is the most affected department in the country, with an estimated 55,000 people evacuated to shelters, including 22,000 people from the municipality of Tajumulco.
- In the Department of Sololá, the team reported that municipalities along Lake Atitlán suffered damage to water and sanitation, communications, and public infrastructure systems. In San Pedro de la Laguna, more than 1,200 people were forced to evacuate to shelters, and approximately 30 homes were completely destroyed. All five schools in the

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

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

town were closed, and two were nearly destroyed. Water sources are contaminated in San Pedro, and community members are drinking unfiltered lake water.

- According to the USAID assessment team, the municipality of Santiago Atitlan, Sololá, is housing more than 3,500 people in shelters. Those affected by the flooding urgently need potable water and temporary shelter, as well as psychological and social support, and health surveillance. Local officials from San Lucas Toliman, Solalá Department reported that the flooding destroyed water distribution systems.
- In Cuilco municipality, Huehuetenango Department, the assessment team reported that landslides severed large portions of the two major roads connecting Cuilco to neighboring municipalities, isolating the community from assistance in the initial days of the disaster. According to the governor of Huehuetenango, Cuilco was the most affected municipality, with 5,800 affected, including nearly 2,000 homeless. In the municipality of Tectitan, 2,000 people were displaced and an additional 2,400 affected.

El Salvador

- Two simultaneous emergencies—the severe flooding caused by Tropical Storm Stan and the eruption of the Santa Ana volcano—affected roughly half of the country and forced the evacuation of more than 69,000 people to local shelters. 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.
- According to the Government of El Salvador and COEN, these emergencies affected 70,000 people, 36,154 of whom are in 388 shelters. The Government of El Salvador has confirmed 69 deaths due to flood-related events, primarily mudslides.
- The main health problems in shelters housing those affected by the emergencies are acute respiratory infections, skin problems, diarrhea, anxiety disorders, and bacterial conjunctivitis. These problems result from crowding; exposure to stagnant, dirty water; the weather; and difficulties with personal hygiene. Despite these problems, no waste-related sources of infection have been reported.
- Except for families who lost homes due to severe rain and flood damage, many of the individuals affected by the floods have returned to their homes. The 6,000 to 7,000 people affected by the Santa Ana volcano are still in shelters, where they will remain for the foreseeable future due to continued volcanic seismic activity. Preliminary damage estimates by the Government of El Salvador indicate that \$229 million will be needed for reconstruction.
- According to Oxfam, conditions in rural areas remain precarious. People returning to their homes and farms are encountering damaged systems for drinking water and waste disposal, which put people at risk for stomach ailments, hepatitis, and respiratory infections from mold.
- On October 3, a two-person USAID/OFDA team led by the Senior Regional Advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) 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 El Salvador and continues to assess needs and coordinate with local partners.

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 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.
- The Government 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.
- According to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), the rainfall affected approximately 2,000 people in San José. Individuals evacuated from their homes are currently accommodated in 24 shelters or in the houses of family and neighbors.

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 including 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.
- On October 12, USAID/OFDA provided \$1.2 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. PAHO is coordinating an environmental risk assessment, including a health perspective on integrated risk prevention efforts regarding epidemic diseases such as dengue fever, diarrhea, hepatitis, and leptospirosis.

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 committed \$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. 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.

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
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
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$2,150,345
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO GUATEMALA IN FY 2006			\$2,150,345

¹ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of October 18, 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 18, 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 18, 2005.

USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO COSTA RICA

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE¹			
CNE	Emergency Relief Supplies, Water, and Food	Affected Areas	\$50,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$50,000
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO COSTA RICA IN FY 2006			\$50,000

⁴ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of October 18, 2005.

TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO IN FY 2006	\$2,500,345
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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.