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

Latin America and the Caribbean – Floods

Fact Sheet #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2009

December 10, 2008

BACKGROUND AND KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- From October to early December 2008, heavy rainfall has resulted in floods across Central and South America. Areas in Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama sustained substantial damage. Between October 14 and 29, Tropical Depression Sixteen caused floods in Guatemala, Belize, and Honduras. In November, heavy rainfall caused floods and mudslides in Panama, Costa Rica, and Brazil.
- According to relief organizations and government disaster management agencies, floods in Central and South America have affected more than 250,000 people and damaged or destroyed houses, infrastructure, and crops.
- As of December 3, USAID/OFDA had 15 emergency staff positioned throughout the region to respond to the floods. Working closely with USAID missions and U.S. Embassy staff, USAID/OFDA emergency experts have conducted damage assessments, identified needs, and coordinated assistance with local disaster officials.
- To date in FY 2009, USAID/OFDA has provided more than \$800,000 to support the purchase and distribution of emergency relief supplies, including plastic sheeting, water containers, blankets, and hygiene kits, to affected communities in six countries.
- U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) disaster relief teams from the Joint Task Force–Bravo (JTF–B), based at the Soto Cano Air Base in Honduras, have delivered more than 293,000 pounds of emergency relief supplies to flood-affected populations in Panama and Costa Rica. The teams, composed of 68 DOD personnel from JTF–B, supported U.S. relief efforts in both countries since November 26 and have conducted 92 helicopter missions.
- To date, the total value of U.S. Government (USG) humanitarian assistance in response to floods is more than \$2 million.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE		
Country	Estimated Affected Population	Source
Belize	38,000 individuals in 24 communities directly affected, 814 homes damaged	GOB ¹ – October 27, 2008
Brazil	120 dead, 31 missing, 69,000 displaced	GOBR ² – November 25, 2008
Costa Rica	46,000 individuals directly affected, of whom 5,408 relocated to shelters, 4,600 houses damaged or destroyed	GOCR ³ – November 26, 2008
Guatemala	48,310 affected, 8,580 houses damaged	GOG ⁴ – November 4, 2008
Honduras	130,000 individuals in 312 communities directly affected, 13 killed, 9,000 relocated to shelters, 4,000 houses damaged or destroyed	GOH ⁵ – October 21, 2008
Panama	7,400 relocated to shelters, 5 deaths, 2 missing persons, 8 individuals seriously injured	GOP ⁶ – November 24, 2008

¹ Government of Belize (GOB)

² Government of Brazil (GOBR)

³ Government of Costa Rica (GOCR)

⁴ Government of Guatemala (GOG)

⁵ Government of Honduras (GOH)

⁶ Government of Panama (GOP)

FY 2009 HUMANITARIAN FUNDING PROVIDED TO DATE IN RESPONSE TO FLOODING

USAID/OFDA Assistance to Belize	\$50,000
USAID/OFDA Assistance to Brazil	\$100,000
USAID/OFDA Assistance to Costa Rica	\$143,448
DOD Assistance to Costa Rica	\$287,338
USAID/OFDA Assistance to Guatemala	\$74,997
USAID/OFDA Assistance to Honduras	\$436,072
USAID/OFDA Assistance to Panama	\$164,678
DOD Assistance to Panama	\$862,014
Total USG Humanitarian Assistance to Central and South America	\$2,068,547

CURRENT SITUATION

Belize

- According to the GOB, between October 14 and 27, Tropical Depression Sixteen caused extensive floods in at least 24 communities in central and western Belize, affecting approximately 38,000 people. Floods damaged more than 800 houses, including 130 houses in Cayo, the most affected district, and resulted in the suspension of classes in schools in Cayo, Belize, Stann Creek, and Toledo districts. Floods also disrupted agricultural activities and caused extensive damage to bridges and roads.
- USAID/OFDA deployed a disaster management expert and a surge capacity disaster management consultant to assess the situation and coordinate with other emergency response actors.

Brazil

- According to the USAID/OFDA assessment team deployed to Brazil, heavy rainfall caused floods and mudslides in Santa Catarina State, particularly affecting Ilhota town and Blumenau city. As of December 2, the USAID/OFDA assessment team reported nearly 120 deaths, 31 missing persons, and over 69,000 displaced individuals. The GOBR reported that floods also damaged or destroyed infrastructure statewide, isolating at least eight cities and leaving residents without access to safe drinking water or electricity.
- During the week of November 24, two USAID/OFDA disaster management experts traveled to Santa Catarina State to conduct assessments of affected areas and accompany GOBR officials in relief operations. On November 27, the USAID/OFDA regional office in San José, Costa Rica, activated a surge capacity disaster management consultant for one week to join the USAID/OFDA assessment team.

Costa Rica

- Since November 18, continued heavy rains on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica have resulted in floods in Limón, Heredia, and San José provinces. According to the GOCR, as of November 28, floods had affected approximately 46,000 people, including 5,408 individuals relocated to 67 shelters. The GOCR National Emergency Commission (CNE) reported that floods have particularly impacted communities in Talamanca, Matina, Siquirres, and Pococí districts in Limón Province and Sarapiquí district in Heredia Province. According to the CNE, floods also damaged or destroyed approximately 4,600 houses, 2,205 wells, 11 bridges, 7 dikes, and 52 sections of highway.
- Five USAID/OFDA staff, including two disaster management experts and two surge capacity disaster management consultants working in Limón Province, and a regional advisor based in San José, supported relief efforts in coordination with the CNE, local and regional emergency staff, and the Costa Rican Red Cross.
- In addition, DOD disaster relief teams from JTF–B conducted 49 missions and delivered over 90,000 pounds of relief supplies by helicopter to affected areas.
- On November 28, a USAID/OFDA-chartered commodity flight delivered emergency relief supplies, which the CNE distributed to affected populations in collaboration with the Costa Rican Red Cross.

Guatemala

- Between October 13 and 29, heavy rainfall and subsequent floods resulting from Tropical Depression Sixteen caused extensive damage in northern Guatemala, particularly affecting Izabal, Petén, Quiché, and Alta Verapaz departments. On November 4, the GOG National Emergency Response Committee (CONRED) reported that heavy rainfall and associated floods resulted in three deaths and displaced an estimated 48,310 individuals, including 10,674 people relocated to temporary shelters. The tropical depression also damaged approximately 8,580 homes, 73 bridges, and nearly 1,480 miles of road.
- USAID/OFDA activated a disaster management expert to assess affected areas and coordinate with local government and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners during the emergency response.

Honduras

- Between October 14 and 18, Tropical Depression Sixteen crossed northwestern Honduras, causing heavy rains and severe floods, followed by three days of additional rain. According to the GOH Permanent Emergency Commission (COPECO), by October 21, the rainfall and associated floods had killed 13 people and affected nearly 130,000 individuals in 312 communities. Floods displaced more than 21,000 individuals, including an estimated 9,000 people relocated to temporary shelters. The tropical depression and floods also damaged or destroyed infrastructure and approximately 4,000 houses, particularly in Cortés, Atlántida, and Yoro departments.

Panama

- Since November 19, heavy rains have resulted in floods and landslides in northwestern Panama, particularly affecting Boca del Toro, Colón, and Chiriquí departments. The GOP National Civil Protection System (SINAPROC) reported that the flooding has resulted in five deaths, at least two people missing, and eight individuals seriously injured. According to SINAPROC, more than 7,400 people relocated to emergency shelters. SINAPROC also reported significant damage to at least four bridges and several major roads.
- On November 27, a USAID/OFDA-chartered aircraft arrived in Panama, delivering emergency relief supplies valued at over \$125,000 including transport costs, from the USAID/OFDA Miami warehouse. The relief commodities included 5,000 blankets, 5,000 hygiene kits, and 5,000 water containers.
- USAID/OFDA deployed a surge capacity disaster management consultant and two field officers to assess flood damage and determine whether additional assistance was needed.
- In addition, DOD disaster relief teams from JTF–B conducted 43 missions and delivered approximately 200,000 pounds of relief supplies by helicopter to affected areas.

USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Belize

- On October 27, U.S. Ambassador Robert J. Dieter declared a disaster due to the effects of the floods. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$50,000 through the U.S. Embassy in Belmopan to the Belize Red Cross for local procurement and distribution of emergency relief supplies.

Brazil

- On November 25, U.S. Chargé d' Affaires Lisa J. Kubiske declared a disaster due to the effects of the floods. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$100,000 through USAID/Brazil to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) for emergency assistance, including local procurement and distribution of emergency relief supplies for affected populations.
- According to the U.S. Embassy in Brasilia, 23 American companies active in Brazil contributed to the relief effort, including in-kind and cash donations, logistical support for the delivery of relief supplies, and employee collection campaigns.
- During the week of November 24, two USAID/OFDA disaster management experts traveled to Santa Catarina State to conduct assessments of affected areas and accompany GOBR officials in relief operations. On November 27, the USAID/OFDA regional office in San José, Costa Rica, activated a surge capacity disaster management consultant for one week to join the USAID/OFDA assessment team.

Costa Rica

- On November 26, U.S. Ambassador Peter E. Cianchette declared a disaster due to the effects of floods. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$85,000 through the U.S. Embassy in San José to CNE for the local procurement and transport of emergency relief supplies to affected populations.
- On November 27, USAID/OFDA activated two surge capacity disaster management consultants for a period of one week. The consultants joined the USAID/OFDA disaster management expert deployed to Limón to conduct assessments of affected areas. Two additional USAID/OFDA staff members are working from the regional office in San José to support the assessment and response efforts in Costa Rica and Panama. The USAID/OFDA assessment team in Limón Province continues to coordinate emergency response efforts with CNE officials, local and regional emergency staff, and the Costa Rican Red Cross.
- On November 28, a USAID/OFDA-chartered commodity flight delivered emergency relief supplies, including 100 boxes of plastic sheeting, 5,000 water containers, 5,004 hygiene kits, 5,000 blankets, and 10 chain saws, valued at over \$140,000 including transport costs, to the Juan Santamaria International Airport near San José. CNE distributed the relief commodities to affected populations in collaboration with the Costa Rican Red Cross (CRRC).
- As of December 8, DOD disaster relief teams from JTF–B conducted 49 missions and delivered 93,800 pounds of relief supplies by helicopter to affected areas.

Guatemala

- On November 6, U.S. Ambassador Steven G. McFarland declared a disaster due to Tropical Depression Sixteen and resulting floods in Guatemala. In response, USAID/OFDA through USAID/Guatemala provided \$75,000 to CONRED for the purchase and distribution of emergency relief supplies, including hygiene kits, to affected areas.
- A USAID/OFDA disaster management expert deployed to Guatemala to assess the flood damage and work with partners during the emergency response.

Honduras

- On October 21, U.S. Ambassador Hugo Llorens declared a disaster due to Tropical Depression Sixteen and resulting floods. In response, USAID/OFDA provided through USAID/Honduras \$50,000 to the local NGO Aldea Global, \$100,000 to CARE, \$50,000 to CRS, and \$50,000 to Save the Children/UK (SC/UK) for emergency relief supplies.
- USAID/OFDA also worked with COPECO and CARE to procure and distribute emergency relief supplies. COPECO utilized \$25,000 of previously stockpiled relief supplies, provided by USAID/OFDA and USAID/Honduras, which CARE distributed to affected communities.
- USAID/OFDA also provided the GOH with \$50,000 for fuel expenditures related to transport of emergency relief supplies and other emergency relief activities.
- USAID/OFDA deployed a disaster management expert to further assess the effects of floods and organize air transport of relief supplies to affected areas, in collaboration with DOD.

Panama

- On November 24, U.S. Ambassador Barbara J. Stephenson declared a disaster due to the effects of floods. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$125,000 through USAID/Panama to SINAPROC for the local procurement and distribution of 500 blankets, 5,004 hygiene kits, and 5,000 water containers.
- On November 27, a USAID/OFDA-chartered aircraft arrived in Panama, delivering emergency relief supplies from the USAID/OFDA Miami warehouse. The relief commodities included 5,000 blankets, 5,000 hygiene kits, and 5,000 water containers.
- At the height of the emergency, USAID/OFDA deployed a regional advisor, a disaster management expert and two surge capacity disaster management consultants to Panama to assess flood damage and determine whether additional assistance was needed.
- As of December 8, DOD disaster relief teams from JTF-B had conducted 43 missions and delivered approximately 200,000 pounds of relief supplies by helicopter to affected areas.

USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO BELIZE

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE¹			
Belize Red Cross	Emergency Relief Supplies, Logistics	Affected Areas	\$50,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$50,000
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO BELIZE IN FY 2009			\$50,000

¹ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of December 10, 2008.

USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO BRAZIL

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE²			
CRS	Emergency Relief Supplies, Logistics	Santa Catarina State	\$100,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$100,000
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO BRAZIL IN FY 2009			\$100,000

² USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of December 10, 2008.

USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO COSTA RICA

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE³			
GOCR National Emergency Commission	Emergency Relief Supplies, Logistics	Limón Province	\$85,000
U.S. Embassy in San José	Emergency Relief Supplies, Logistics	Limón Province	\$58,448
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$143,448
DOD ASSISTANCE			
	Emergency Relief Supplies	Limón Province	\$287,338
TOTAL DOD			\$287,338
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO COSTA RICA IN FY 2009			\$430,786

³ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of December 10, 2008.

USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO GUATEMALA

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE⁴			
CONRED	Emergency Relief Supplies	Affected Areas	\$74,997
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$74,997
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO GUATEMALA IN FY 2009			\$74,997

⁴ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of December 10, 2008.

USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO HONDURAS

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE⁵			
Aldea Global	Emergency Relief Supplies, Logistics	Affected Areas	\$50,000
CARE	Emergency Relief Supplies, Logistics	Affected Areas	\$100,000
CARE and COPECO	Emergency Relief Supplies, Logistics	Affected Areas	\$136,072
CRS	Emergency Relief Supplies, Logistics	Affected Areas	\$50,000
GOH	Emergency Relief Activities, Logistics ⁶	Affected Areas	\$50,000
SC/UK	Emergency Relief Supplies, Logistics	Affected Areas	\$50,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$436,072
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO HONDURAS IN FY 2009			\$436,072

⁵ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of December 10, 2008.

⁶ Assistance to the GOH consists of fuel for transport of relief supplies.

USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO PANAMA

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE⁷			
SINAPROC	Emergency Relief Supplies, Logistics	Affected Areas	\$164,798
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$164,798

DOD ASSISTANCE			
	Emergency Relief Supplies, Logistics	Affected Areas	\$862,014
TOTAL DOD			\$862,014
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO PANAMA IN FY 2009			\$1,026,812

⁷ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of December 10, 2008.

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. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for flood response efforts in the LAC Region can be found at www.interaction.org
- 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; and ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information 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.int