



PRESS RELEASE

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FIAES EMERGENCY FUNDS DISTRIBUTED TO RURAL COMMUNITIES

SAN SALVADOR— The Enterprise for the Americas Initiative Fund of El Salvador (FIAES), which was created through a debt for nature swap by the U.S. government and the government of El Salvador, distributed \$305,436 to 15 local institutions to carry out emergency projects in areas affected by Hurricane Stan and the eruption of the Ilamatepec Volcano.

The projects, designed by 15 community development associations (ADESCOs) and non-government organizations, include the provision of food packages, medical/psychological services, agricultural supplies, hand tools, basic household goods, as well as environmental conservation training, civil and agricultural mitigation works, preparation of land use maps, and construction and refurbishing of shelters. Local counterpart contributions equal \$53,972, for a total investment of \$359,408.

FIAES originates from a bilateral agreement between the governments of El Salvador and the United States to forgive approximately \$464 million in bilateral debt. The agreement was ratified in 1993, where El Salvador agreed to pay \$41.2 million of the interest of this debt over a 20 year period. The resources have been placed in a special fund that is used to finance community led environmental and child survival projects under the administration of FIAES. Later, FIAES received additional resources to support tropical forest conservation projects.

During a ceremony held on February 28, 2006 in San Salvador, Mark Silverman, director of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in El Salvador and the U.S. government representative to the Administrative Council of FIAES, noted that the projects will address priority needs of thousands of people located in seven departments and 14 municipalities affected by the recent natural disasters.

The Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Hugo Barrera and Mark Silverman spoke to the beneficiary organizations and led the distribution of resources to the 15 institutions.

Carmen Argueta de Marquez, a beneficiary from Amando Lopez Community and representative of Mangle Association, Usulután, expressed her appreciation.

"I thank FIAES for its solidarity and support. We will now be able to rebuild the composting latrines that were damaged by Stan in the Lower Lempa River. We will also work on our diversified vegetable garden after having lost between 70 and 100 per cent of our maize and beans crops," she said.

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