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

**2014 Hurricane Season Preparedness and Response Capabilities Overview  
May 23, 2014**

Based on forecasts from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), a near-normal or below-normal Atlantic hurricane season, which begins on June 1 and ends on November 30, is expected in 2014. NOAA predicts eight to 13 named storms, of which three to six could become hurricanes, including one to two major hurricanes of Category Three or higher on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. An average hurricane season has 12 named storms, including six hurricanes—two of which are major hurricanes. Seasonal hurricane outlooks do not provide information on how many storms will make landfall on a specific location this far in advance. USAID/OFDA will monitor individual storms as they develop and provide updates during the hurricane season when storms are threatening populations.

USAID/OFDA is ready to respond to the 2014 hurricane season with an experienced team of disaster management professionals strategically located throughout Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), pre-positioned emergency relief supplies and communications equipment, and agreements with partners and service providers to support the delivery of humanitarian assistance, as appropriate.

**DISASTER RESPONSE**

- **Storm Monitoring and Advisories:** USAID/OFDA has developed an e-mail alert system that provides up-to-date information on storms' development and location, projected trajectory, and suggested actions for mission disaster relief officers (MDROs) and other relevant U.S. Government (USG) personnel.
- **Pre-deployment:** USAID/OFDA has standard operating procedures for multiple scenarios involving hurricanes in the LAC region. In the event of an impending hurricane, after consulting with the U.S. embassy or USAID mission in the affected country, USAID/OFDA may pre-deploy a disaster risk management specialist (DRMS), local surge capacity consultants, a regional advisor (RA), a humanitarian assistance advisor to the military (HAA/M), a small assessment team, or a fully equipped response team to be in place before the hurricane hits.
- **Deployment of a DART:** In response to severe storms, USAID may deploy a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to conduct assessments, identify and prioritize needs, manage on-site relief activities, and coordinate response activities with USG agencies and host-country organizations. In most cases, USAID also activates a Response Management Team to support the DART and coordinate response activities in Washington, D.C.

**RESOURCES**

- **Stockpiled Relief Supplies:** USAID/OFDA stockpiles relief items—including plastic sheeting for temporary shelters, water treatment units, hygiene kits, kitchen supplies, blankets, and water containers and water bladders—in a regional warehouse in Miami, Florida. In the event of a disaster in the LAC region, the relief supplies are available for immediate transportation to the affected country. In some cases, USAID/OFDA pre-positions emergency relief supplies in high-risk countries to ensure that emergency supplies are available when the hurricane passes. USAID/OFDA also purchases supplies locally, when appropriate.
- **Aircraft Support:** USAID/OFDA maintains agreements with commercial air service companies throughout the LAC region to ensure that USG humanitarian staff and supplies are transported to

disaster-affected areas in a timely manner. If commercial air service is unavailable, USAID/OFDA may request logistical assistance from the U.S. military.

## **STAFF**

- **Core Regional Staff:** USAID/OFDA maintains a senior RA (SRA), four RAs, a program officer, two information officers, and a communications officer at the USAID/OFDA regional office in San José, Costa Rica. USAID/OFDA also maintains a team of HAA/Ms at the U.S. Southern Command in Miami, Florida, who help coordinate USAID and U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) humanitarian assistance in the region. USAID/OFDA staff are also deployed to Bridgetown, Barbados, on a rotational basis from June to October to cover the eastern Caribbean during hurricane season.
- **USAID/OFDA Haiti Field Office:** The USAID/OFDA Haiti field office, which comprises two program officers and an administrative support staff, works with the Government of Haiti and partners to strengthen national and local disaster preparedness and response capabilities and remains ready to respond to future hydro-meteorological events—including hurricanes and other tropical storms—as appropriate.
- **USAID/OFDA Headquarters, Washington, D.C.:** The USAID/OFDA/LAC regional team at headquarters includes a team leader, a senior disaster operations specialist, two disaster operations specialists, and three information officers. In addition, USAID/OFDA maintains a cadre of technical sector specialists based in Washington, D.C., to inform disaster response and risk reduction programming.
- **RDAP:** Through its Regional Disaster Assistance Program (RDAP), USAID/OFDA has a 20-person DRMS network in the LAC region, who train and provide technical assistance to national disaster organizations and first responders on disaster risk reduction and preparedness activities.
- **On-Call Staff:** The following experienced disaster management staff are available for immediate deployment to a disaster-affected region:
  - the SRA and four RAs located in San José,
  - the 20-person DRMS network, and
  - approximately 350 on-call local surge capacity consultants located throughout the region.

## **INFORMATION SHARING AND COORDINATION**

- **Briefings and Cables:** At the start of the hurricane season, the LAC SRA briefs USAID and other USG entities, such as the White House National Security Staff, U.S. Congress, DoD, and the U.S. Departments of State and Homeland Security, as well as the InterAction alliance of U.S.-based non-governmental organizations, on USAID/OFDA's response capabilities. In addition, USAID/OFDA issues an annual hurricane season preparedness cable to provide all diplomatic posts with guidance for disaster planning and response.
- **MDROs and EACs:** USAID/OFDA provides annual training and guidance to MDROs at U.S. embassies and USAID missions in the Caribbean, Central America, and Mexico. USAID/OFDA staff also meet with U.S. embassy Emergency Action Committees (EACs) to review and update steps to provide assistance to a host country after a major disaster.
- **JHOC:** USAID/OFDA routinely conducts Joint Humanitarian Operations Course (JHOC) trainings to familiarize U.S. military personnel with ways to collaborate most effectively with USAID and the USG interagency during joint disaster response operations.