

OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (USAID/OFDA)

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA



USAID/OFDA staff visited Roraima State in Brazil to assess the humanitarian conditions of Venezuelans in public shelters and met with shelter staff to discuss priority needs. *Photo by Antonio Pinheiro, USAID/OFDA*

USAID Assists Vulnerable Venezuelans and Host Communities in Brazil and Colombia

Deteriorating economic, political, and social conditions in Venezuela have triggered the most significant population displacement in Latin American history, straining public services in host communities, particularly in Colombia's border departments of Arauca, La Guajira, and Norte de Santander, and northern Brazil's Roraima State. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that approximately 1.5 million Venezuelans have departed Venezuela for other countries throughout the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region since 2014. More than 600,000, 90,000, and 40,000 Venezuelans have migrated to Colombia, Ecuador, and Brazil, respectively, with thousands more arriving every week.

On April 13, U.S. Vice President Michael R. Pence announced at the Summit of the Americas in Lima, Peru, that the U.S. would provide nearly \$15.6 million in additional humanitarian assistance to meet the basic needs of Venezuelans who have left their country and the communities hosting them. The funds include \$12 million from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) toward the recently

released UNHCR supplementary budget appeal, and nearly \$3.6 million in additional USAID/OFDA humanitarian funding. These funds will support efforts to provide vulnerable Venezuelans, returning Colombians, and other populations in need with safe drinking water, hygiene supplies, shelter materials, protection from violence and exploitation, and work and education opportunities, in coordination with humanitarian organizations and government partners.

The newly announced funds supplement an initial \$2.5 million in USAID assistance—announced in mid-March by USAID Administrator Mark Green—for emergency food and health activities and more than \$3 million that State/PRM provided to UNHCR in 2017 to support vulnerable Venezuelans.

During the Summit of the Americas, USAID Administrator Green said, "We remain very concerned about the struggle Venezuelan citizens face every day to meet their families' basic needs. The assistance that we are announcing today will help Venezuelans in Colombia and Brazil to cope with hardship, by providing them potable water, shelter,

Continues on page 2

USAID/OFDA Helps Strengthen Humanitarian Logistics Capacity in Paraguay

The El Niño weather phenomenon exacerbated heavy rains and river swelling in Paraguay during the December–February summer season, causing widespread flooding. Floods extended into populated areas, resulting in severe health concerns and loss of housing, public infrastructure, and livelihoods.

In the wake of the response to the unprecedented floods in Paraguay during the past few years, the Government of Paraguay (GoP) National Emergency Secretariat (SEN) is working to strengthen response preparedness and humanitarian logistics nationwide. Recently, SEN built additional emergency relief warehouses in various areas of the country to support the rapid delivery of emergency relief supplies and services—including emergency food assistance, safe drinking water, hygiene kits, temporary shelter, and medicines, among others—to affected populations in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

To support GoP efforts to improve emergency preparedness throughout the nation, USAID/OFDA, through the UN World Food Program (WFP) and in coordination with SEN, held a training program in Paraguay's San Bernardino District to bolster the humanitarian

Continues on page 2



USAID/OFDA, through WFP, strengthened the humanitarian logistics capacity of 60 GoP officials and response staff. *Photo courtesy of SEN*

Humanitarian Logistics Training, continued from page 1

logistics and supply chain capacities of key response actors.

“Through this capacity building program, we aim to help strengthen disaster preparedness and response coordination in Paraguay. Humanitarian logistics can save more lives as it helps humanitarian aid reach more people in a faster timeframe and a cost-efficient manner,” said USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor Sarah McNiece.

The program, conducted from February 20 through April 11, provided training on warehouse, humanitarian supply chain, and inventory management; procurement processes; logistics clusters; and optimal infrastructure layout and design, among other topics, to 60 GoP officials, emergency response personnel, and municipal staff. Some of these individuals will work in the warehouse facilities recently built by SEN.

After completing three training modules, participants visited several government warehouses in Paraguay. The program culminated with a three-day visit to the UN Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) in Panama, where a group of 11 participants observed humanitarian logistics operations, learned about standard operating procedures, and participated in a simulation exercise on establishing a mobile storage unit.

In addition, SEN is leading the creation of a logistics committee composed of key humanitarian staff to further improve national humanitarian logistics capacity. This group will coordinate efforts to enhance warehouse infrastructure, technology, and procurement processes, as well as train humanitarian actors. WFP will assign a dedicated staff member to work with SEN, providing guidance on the proper application of skills and knowledge gained through the training program.



During the visit to UNHRD in Panama, participants learned how to establish a mobile storage unit. Photo courtesy of WFP

Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean



Tel: +(506) 2290-4133
Email: ofdalac@ofda.gov
Internet: www.usaid.gov

USAID Assists Vulnerable Venezuelans, continued from page 1

and other supplies. As good neighbors and supporters of the Venezuelan people, we are glad to be able to help, but we all know that this action is merely a short-term response, not a solution.”

Since mid-February, USAID/OFDA has deployed multiple assessment teams to evaluate the humanitarian situation in the border regions of Brazil and Colombia, determine priority needs, and coordinate relief efforts with local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies, and other U.S. Government (USG) actors.

USAID/OFDA Senior Regional Advisor Tim Callaghan said, “During the last three decades we have responded to different types of natural disasters in the LAC region, but this is a more heartbreaking situation as humans have caused it. In coordination with hosting countries, USAID/OFDA has partnered with NGOs—who know the local context and culture and have worked for years in Brazil and Colombia border areas—to provide urgently required health care services, water, sanitation, and hygiene, and protection and livelihoods support to vulnerable Venezuelans.”

As of April 20, USAID/OFDA had provided more than \$3.5 million to respond to the humanitarian needs of vulnerable Venezuelans and host communities in Colombia, including \$500,000 to the Pan American Health Organization to support primary and preventive health assistance along the Venezuelan border.

In addition, USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) has contributed \$2 million to the WFP to provide emergency food vouchers to vulnerable Venezuelans and Colombians who have returned from Venezuela to Colombia. The vouchers, which allow food-insecure households to purchase food from local markets, aim to increase household dietary diversity, while supporting local vendors and agricultural producers.

Furthermore, in Brazil, USAID/OFDA is providing \$500,000 to the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) to support response efforts in the northwestern border state of Roraima, where the daily flow of Venezuelans has tripled since the start of 2018. With this assistance, ADRA will provide relief items—including personal hygiene kits and kitchen sets—to Venezuelans in public shelters in Roraima’s Boa Vista and Pacaraima communities.

From January 2017 to April 20, 2018, the USG provided nearly \$21.4 million to support humanitarian assistance for Venezuelans and other vulnerable populations in Colombia and Brazil.



USAID/OFDA staff visit a border crossing in Norte de Santander’s capital city of Cúcuta to assess the humanitarian situation and meet with Colombian Red Cross and key humanitarian staff. Photo by Mauricio Delgado, USAID/OFDA