Chronic conflict, earthquakes, recurrent seasonal storms, floods, droughts, and severe winter weather, as well as limited government response capacity, present significant challenges to vulnerable populations in South Asia. Between FY 2004 and FY 2013, USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) and USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) have provided humanitarian assistance in response to a diverse range of natural and complex emergencies in the region, including cyclones in Bangladesh, earthquakes in India and Pakistan, and complex crises in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, as well as floods throughout the region.

Between FY 2004 and FY 2013, USAID provided more than $2.4 billion in disaster response assistance in South Asia. USAID/OFDA assistance included approximately $780 million for programs in health, nutrition, protection, agriculture and food security, livelihoods, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), as well as support for humanitarian coordination and logistics and the provision of relief commodities. USAID/FFP assistance included more than $1.6 billion in emergency food assistance.

In the last decade, USAID deployed multiple humanitarian assessment teams to the region, including six Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs). In December 2004, members of a multi-country DART responded to the impacts
of the Indian Ocean tsunami in India, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka. A DART also deployed to Bangladesh in FY 2008 after Cyclone Sidr. However, USAID deployed the majority of recent DARTs in South Asia to Pakistan, including DARTs following earthquakes in FY 2006 and FY 2009, conflict and displacement in FY 2009, and countrywide flooding in FY 2010. USAID has also activated multiple Washington, D.C.,-based Response Management Teams to support DART coordination and response efforts in the region.

Due to the recurrent or chronic nature of many of the disasters that affect the region, USAID/OFDA priorities include supporting and promoting activities to help reduce the vulnerability of populations at risk of climate-induced and human-made disasters, as well as to increase resilience to future shocks. USAID/OFDA has developed a regional disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategy to complement emergency assistance interventions and address the underlying causes of vulnerability, emphasizing building local capacity to prepare for and respond to disaster events. As such, USAID/OFDA programs reduce the impact of emergencies in the region by increasing the capacity of local emergency response agencies and personnel and enabling communities to recognize hazards through early warning systems. DRR programs include earthquake risk management in Nepal, community-based disaster risk management in Pakistan, capacity building for local authorities and first responders in India, and hazard mapping in Afghanistan.

Through emergency and development food assistance programs, USAID/FFP works to save lives and reduce food insecurity in times of crisis and situations of chronic food insecurity. USAID/FFP emergency food assistance includes both in-kind food aid and cash-based assistance in the form of local and regional procurement of food commodities, cash transfers, and food vouchers, where market conditions allow.

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1 FY 2013 rounded figures represent committed or obligated amounts as of September 30, 2013. FY 2013 figures are subject to fluctuation due to end-of-fiscal-year financial review and reconciliation activities. Figures do not include USAID/OFDA disaster preparedness and mitigation assistance provided outside of declared disaster responses or USAID/FFP development assistance.

2 OFDA funding for FY 2005 includes $6,639,537 in regional tsunami funding.

+ Chart does not include disaster preparedness and mitigation assistance, administrative support costs, or funding not categorized by sector due to changes to the USAID/OFDA accounting system that occurred during the decade covered by this document.