

WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE SECTOR UPDATE



USAID/OFDA partners repair a piped water distribution system in a community affected by Hurricane Matthew in Haiti. Photo by Frank Broadhurst/USAID

WASH Support in the Wake of Hurricane Matthew

On October 4, 2016, Hurricane Matthew swept through southwestern Haiti, affecting approximately 1.4 million people. The hurricane damaged or destroyed much of the region's WASH infrastructure, leading to concerns of a resurgence of cholera in hurricane-affected communities. To mitigate the risk of an outbreak, USAID/OFDA provided \$5 million to ten partners to focus on critical cholera interventions, including promoting pre-emptive hygiene practices and providing water and sanitation assistance at collective shelters and cholera treatment facilities, as well as providing chlorinated water supplies, soap, and water containers to affected populations. USAID/OFDA also procured more than 38 MT of chlorine—sufficient to disinfect all of Haiti's piped water systems for three months. During the hurricane response, USAID/OFDA humanitarian partners repaired 56 water systems and established nine emergency water treatment stations, ensuring safe drinking water for many vulnerable communities.

Mitigating the Spread of Cholera in Yemen

Conflict, food insecurity, malnutrition, and cholera are contributing to an increasingly complex humanitarian response in Yemen. Approximately 21 million people in Yemen are in need of humanitarian assistance, with more than 772,000 suspected cholera cases reported as of September 30. In response to the resurgence of cholera in Yemen, USAID/OFDA is funding 11 humanitarian partners to support the provision of safe drinking water, the distribution of hygiene kits and conduct hygiene promotion interventions. In addition to the cholera response, USAID/OFDA partners are implementing a range of activities, including the construction of latrines, solid waste management in coordination with municipal authorities, and water distribution system and sanitation infrastructure rehabilitation in communities, health facilities, and IDP shelters.

Sector Overview

Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs represent vital components of USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) responses to slow- and rapid-onset disasters and complex emergencies, which render populations more susceptible to illness and death from waterborne and communicable diseases.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$353 million to support WASH programs in more than 40 countries.

WASH interventions in emergencies often include construction or repair of latrines, hygiene support, solid waste removal, and the provision of safe drinking water.

USAID/OFDA also links emergency WASH activities with transition and development programs funded by other USAID offices and incorporates institutional partners—such as local governments—in program planning and implementation to promote the sustainability of water- and hygiene-focused projects.

In addition, USAID/OFDA support to operational research enabled the development and testing of improved emergency sanitation options for challenging environments, such as densely populated or flood-prone areas. Other research partners explored methods to improve linkages between markets and emergency WASH responders, with pilots in pre-crisis DRR, chronic, and rapid response contexts.

Due to the scale of need in Yemen, USAID/OFDA has prioritized the integration of WASH into other programming, such as providing hygiene promotion information to beneficiaries of food security and health activities. As of September 30, USAID/OFDA has provided approximately \$48 million for WASH funding in Yemen.

Responding to Drought in the Horn of Africa

A region-wide drought in the Horn of Africa, exacerbated by local conflicts, led to significant levels of displacement, a regional cholera outbreak, food insecurity, and malnutrition in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya in FY 2017.

In response to the drought and cholera outbreak, USAID/OFDA WASH programming in Somalia prioritizes facilitating access to chlorinated drinking water to displaced and at-risk populations, including pastoralists and their core livestock; conducting hygiene promotion activities, and providing sanitation facilities for IDP populations. The cholera outbreak in Somalia started in communities along the Shabelle and Juba rivers when water levels dropped precipitously due to the drought. WASH actors in cholera-affected areas have conducted cholera prevention activities such as disinfecting of contaminated water supplies and establishing water chlorination points at local wells, as well as providing chlorinated water and WASH services at cholera treatment centers. USAID/OFDA has prioritized the integration of WASH and health programming in Somalia, including offering WASH support to health and nutrition facilities.

The Indian Ocean Dipole weather pattern resulted in a drought primarily affecting lowland areas of Ethiopia, particularly southern Ethiopia's Somali Region, which experienced a high incidence of acute watery diarrhea (AWD) and cholera in FY 2017, contributing to an estimated 10.5 million people countrywide in need of WASH assistance, including 843,000 IDPs. In early April 2017, when health authorities in Somali Region were reporting more than 600 new AWD cases a day, USAID/OFDA-supported programs focused on providing safe, chlorinated drinking water, primarily through water trucking, to IDPs and outbreak hotspots, as well as in treatment centers. USAID/OFDA is integrating WASH and nutrition programming in Ethiopia through a \$25 million, 3-year, incrementally-funded WASH and nutrition rapid response mechanism (RRM). USAID/OFDA designed the RRM to rapidly respond to acute, shock-induced nutrition and WASH needs through both stand-alone interventions and integrated WASH support at nutrition programming sites and to households with children enrolled in malnutrition treatment programs.

An estimated 2.7 million people in the 23 drought-affected counties of Kenya are in need of humanitarian assistance to access safe drinking water, as of September. In response, 10 USAID/OFDA partners in Kenya are working to improve access to water in drought-affected areas. Activities are largely concentrated in the most severely drought-affected and less secure areas along the borders with Somalia, Ethiopia, and South Sudan, and focus on rehabilitating water supply points and water delivery systems in those border counties.

USAID/OFDA Support for the Global WASH Cluster

In humanitarian responses, providing WASH support to vulnerable populations as quickly as possible requires effective and timely coordination, supported by rapid assessments and information management. In FY 2017, USAID/OFDA funded the Global WASH Cluster Field Support Team to provide timely, relevant, and measurable support to the WASH Cluster—the coordinating body for humanitarian WASH activities, comprising UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders. USAID/OFDA funding provides personnel support when responses scale up during emergency operations, especially to cover critical functions during the initial stages of an emergency response. These deployments met essential operational needs, and strengthened capacity building and preparedness in more than a dozen countries, including complex emergencies in Burma, the Central African Republic, Iraq, South Sudan, and Yemen, as well as during natural disasters, such as droughts in Kenya and Somalia.

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