THE BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (HA)

Our proposed Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance will advance our goal of seamlessly delivering food and non-food international disaster aid, better serving both national foreign policy interests and people in need of humanitarian assistance.

WHY ARE WE MAKING THESE CHANGES?

The magnitude, political complexity, and protracted nature of complex emergencies pose challenges to USAID’s traditional humanitarian response structure.

Right now, the structure of humanitarian assistance at USAID is based on an artificial and outdated division between emergency food and non-food assistance. This structure keeps us from providing a fully integrated and effective approach to complex crises and natural disasters.

Integrating USAID’s humanitarian efforts will ensure that USAID has one elevated voice in the international community and USG on humanitarian issues and increase efficiency by eliminating duplication. As a result, USAID will deliver more effective humanitarian assistance.
HOW DO THESE CHANGES MAKE USAID MORE FIELD-FOCUSED?

BHA will have access to remarkable technical expertise and capabilities, diverse acquisition and assistance mechanisms, and a broad set of funding sources, including both emergency and non-emergency resources. This enables a comprehensive and holistic approach to humanitarian assistance that links relief and development programming in partnership with Missions.

As we strive to unify humanitarian assistance with stabilization, resilience, and food security, our close collaboration with Missions will improve our effectiveness in addressing crises, building resilience, and providing more cohesive engagement on high-level policy and planning issues. Integration with Missions and field offices will ensure that humanitarian and development interventions are consistent, that we are working toward common goals and commitments, and that our regional and country programs are designed collaboratively to support the Journey to Self-Reliance.

HOW DO THESE CHANGES MAKE USAID MORE FUNCTIONALLY-ALIGNED?

Historically, the structure of humanitarian assistance in USAID has been based on a separation of emergency food and non-food assistance, with OFDA responsible for non-food humanitarian assistance and FFP delivering food assistance. The two offices often work to address related aspects of the same humanitarian assistance challenges, and a majority of program funding has gone to the same countries, emergencies, and, in some cases, partners. Operating as two distinct offices served the Agency well for decades, but amidst the changing humanitarian relief landscape, having two sets of management and support structures with separate policies, processes, systems, tools, and staffs is inherently inefficient.

USAID has therefore proposed a single Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) that will bring together OFDA and FFP, removing the artificial distinction between food and non-food assistance programs. Through the creation of BHA and the consolidation of core capabilities, USAID’s role as the lead Federal coordinator for international disaster assistance will be strengthened, and our humanitarian voice will be elevated and unified in the U.S. Government interagency and with international partners.

BHA will thus work in close collaboration with Missions, the Regional and other Bureaus that support them in USAID/Washington, including the Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS) Bureau and the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security (RFS) within the Relief, Response, and Resilience (R3) structure, ensuring that we are supporting a “One USAID” approach. Working in partnership with our Mission and R3 Bureau colleagues will allow us to lean further forward in target countries, to better leverage Agency resources, and to link humanitarian response, violence and conflict prevention, stabilization, food security and resilience efforts.