Conflict, rapid population growth, limited government response capacity, the effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and a variety of natural hazards—including cyclical drought, floods, and pest infestations—have compounded humanitarian needs in the East Africa and Sudans region over the last decade. Between FY 2011 and FY 2020, USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) provided humanitarian assistance in response to a range of natural and complex emergencies in the region through the former Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) and Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA). Examples include complex emergencies in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan; drought, food insecurity, floods, and desert locust infestations in the Horn of Africa; and the COVID-19 pandemic across the region.

USAID provided approximately $13.4 billion to respond to disasters in the East Africa and Sudans region between FY 2011 and FY 2020. USAID/BHA assistance included approximately $10.1 billion for emergency food assistance and nutrition support through U.S. in-kind food aid; locally, regionally, and internationally procured food; cash transfers for food; food vouchers; specialized nutrition products; and related activities, such as asset-building assistance, livelihood support, and early-recovery agricultural assistance. USAID/BHA support also included more than $3.3 billion for programs in agriculture; economic recovery and market systems; health; humanitarian coordination, information management, and assessments; humanitarian policy, studies, analysis, or applications; logistics support and relief commodities; multipurpose cash assistance; nutrition; protection; shelter and settlements; and water; sanitation, and hygiene.

In the last decade, USAID responded to crises in six countries in East Africa and Sudans, including to 63 declared disasters. USAID frequently deployed humanitarian teams to the region, including three Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs) responding to the complex emergency in South Sudan, drought in Ethiopia, and a regional food security crisis in the Horn of Africa. USAID also activated multiple Washington, D.C.-based Response Management Teams to support coordination and response efforts.