



AFGHANISTAN – COMPLEX EMERGENCY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- Avalanches struck villages in Afghanistan’s Badakhshan, Nuristan, and Parwan provinces during March, resulting in approximately 60 deaths and affecting hundreds of people. USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) responded to the avalanches through implementing partners, who provided emergency relief supplies, conducted rapid needs assessments, and aided the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) in coordinating response efforts.
- Although localized floods are common in Afghanistan in spring, above-average snowfall during the 2011/2012 winter season has increased the risk of extensive flooding as temperatures warm from April to June. To prepare for potential flooding, USAID/OFDA is coordinating with implementing partners to formulate a floods response strategy for the international humanitarian community and is continuing to pre-position relief commodities in strategic locations throughout Afghanistan that can be distributed rapidly if flooding occurs.
- In February, conflict displaced nearly 24,500¹ people in Afghanistan—approximately 18,000 more displaced people compared to January—while nearly 43,000 formerly displaced persons resettled in Afghanistan during the month, according to the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Also during February, natural hazards displaced nearly 7,900 people and affected an additional approximately 13,500 people, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM).
- Since early February, USAID/OFDA has provided nearly \$7.8 million for economic recovery and market systems (ERMS), logistics and relief commodities, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) activities in Afghanistan. In addition, USAID/OFDA provided \$1.2 million to the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO) to continue providing emergency health and nutrition services to people, particularly children, affected by natural disasters and conflict.
- In early March, USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) approved the contribution of 16,000 metric tons (MT) of Title II emergency food assistance for the U.N. World Food Program’s (WFP) Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation in Afghanistan, originally launched in April 2010. USAID/FFP’s contribution, valued at nearly \$20 million, will enable WFP to continue providing food assistance to people adversely affected by the ongoing winter conditions, as well as other humanitarian emergencies.
- To date in FY 2012, the U.S. Government (USG) has provided nearly \$74 million in humanitarian funding to support Afghans affected by conflict and natural disasters. Of the total, USAID/OFDA has contributed more than \$19 million to support humanitarian activities in Afghanistan. In addition, USAID/FFP has provided nearly \$48 million in emergency food assistance, including more than \$40 million to WFP, to provide approximately 31,270 MT of Title II food commodities. In FY 2012, the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) has provided approximately \$7 million for humanitarian assistance, livelihoods support, gender-based violence prevention, and protection interventions for Afghans, including refugees who have returned to Afghanistan and Afghan refugees residing in Iran and Pakistan.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE		Source
Total Conflict-Induced IDPs in Afghanistan	~429,000	UNHCR – February 2012
Refugees in Neighboring Countries	~2.7 million	UNHCR – May 2011
Returnees to Afghanistan since 2002	5.7 million	U.N. – December 2011

¹ This figure does not include internally displaced persons (IDPs) in urban and conflict areas.

HUMANITARIAN FUNDING PROVIDED IN FY 2012²	
USAID/OFDA Assistance to Afghanistan	\$19,000,314
USAID/FFP Assistance to Afghanistan	\$47,854,000
State/PRM Assistance to Afghanistan and Afghans in the Region	\$6,997,887
Total USAID and State Assistance	\$73,852,201

Context

- Since 2002, frequent natural disasters and conflict have displaced populations and generated significant humanitarian needs throughout Afghanistan. Recurring natural disasters in Afghanistan, including drought, floods, landslides, earthquakes, and avalanches, affect an average of 400,000 Afghans each year. In recent years, drought has been the most frequent natural disaster in Afghanistan; since 2000, the country has experienced eight droughts that have resulted in diminished agricultural production. As of December 2011, U.N. agencies estimated that more than 480,000 people, out of a total population of approximately 24.9 million, were internally displaced as a result of conflict and natural disasters in Afghanistan. The number of internally displaced people in Afghanistan is at its highest point since 2002.
- Frequent and protracted displacements place additional pressure on receiving communities, which also have limited resources, resulting in instability and increased humanitarian needs. In addition, insufficient government capacity to repair and expand infrastructure and provide basic services prevents sustainable returns to areas of origin and compounds community vulnerabilities countrywide.
- USAID/OFDA continues to support a three-pronged approach to improving humanitarian response efforts in Afghanistan: supporting rapid response capacity for acute needs following natural disasters and conflict, improving humanitarian indicators and building household economic resilience, and enhancing humanitarian coordination, data collection, and analysis.

Winter Emergency

- Afghanistan's most severe winter in the last 15 years—characterized by above-average snowfall and sustained subfreezing temperatures particularly in the country's northern and central regions—resulted in numerous humanitarian emergencies during February and March. GIRA, the international humanitarian community, and USAID/OFDA, through implementing partners, responded to extreme cold in areas of northern and central Afghanistan, outbreaks of acute respiratory illness and pneumonia in Badakhshan Province, flooding in Balkh and Jowzjan provinces, and avalanches in Badakhshan, Nuristan, and Parwan provinces.
- In addition to assisting in search-and-rescue operations and conducting humanitarian assessments, USAID/OFDA partners provided emergency relief supplies, including shelter, blankets, and clothing, to thousands of affected people during the winter season.
- In late 2011 and early 2012, severe cold killed 24 children in two informal settlements in Kabul Municipality. The Kabul Informal Settlement (KIS) Task Force, comprising U.N. agencies and non-governmental organizations was formed following a February 2 U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)-led assessment of humanitarian needs of KIS residents resulting from severe cold weather. By late February, KIS Task Force members, including USAID/OFDA partners, had distributed cold weather-related emergency relief supplies to all KIS residents. As of mid-February, OCHA assessed that the distribution of emergency relief supplies—blankets, tarpaulins, clothing, stoves, and fuel—had met the short-term, cold weather-related humanitarian needs of KIS residents.

Flood Preparedness

- Localized flooding is recurrent in Afghanistan each spring season, but higher than average snow accumulation during the 2011/2012 winter season has increased the potential for wide-scale flooding in the coming months. Humanitarian Regional Teams coordinated by OCHA have identified entire districts vulnerable to floods in 20 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, with the remaining 14 provinces containing districts that are partially vulnerable to floods. The Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) and the humanitarian community anticipate that food insecurity and livelihood disruptions are more likely than widespread casualties or loss of life during the upcoming flood season.

² Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds.

- The GIRoA National Security Council has initiated flood preparedness meetings with members of the humanitarian community—including USAID/OFDA partners OCHA, WHO, WFP, and IOM—to identify existing gaps in emergency response plans and begin coordination, according to OCHA. Twenty-eight provincial disaster management committees had submitted flood mitigation and preparedness plans to ANDMA headquarters as of March 26, while the GIRoA National Disaster Management Committee had agreed to activate the command-and-control center in the event of wide-scale flooding.

ERMS

- USAID/OFDA supports ERMS projects in Afghanistan to help communities resume economic activity and rebuild livelihoods following natural disasters and conflict. USAID/OFDA currently supports ERMS activities that benefit Afghans adversely affected by the 2011 drought, particularly in the country's northern and central provinces.
- In March, USAID/OFDA committed more than \$2.6 million to provide temporary employment to members of nearly 2,900 drought-affected households in Bamyan and Balkh provinces. The program, implemented by USAID/OFDA partner Save the Children/U.S. (SC/US), will employ individuals to manufacture cold weather-related supplies that can be used during future winters. Beneficiaries will also receive employment to repair and rehabilitate community assets, such as water reservoirs and culverts, which will help mitigate future droughts.
- Also in March, USAID/OFDA approved a program to provide temporary work for farmers in Sar-e-Pul Province who experienced total or nearly total crop failure as a result of the 2011 drought. Working through non-governmental organization partner ZOA, USAID/OFDA has committed nearly \$750,000 for temporary labor opportunities that will benefit as many as 12,000 individuals.

Logistics and Relief Commodities

- In March, USAID/OFDA committed nearly \$2.5 million to expand an emergency humanitarian assistance program currently implemented by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Herat, Laghman, Nangarhar, Paktiya, Khost, and Logar provinces. Through the expansion, IRC plans to train emergency response staff, pre-position emergency relief supplies, and develop the operational capacity to quickly respond to hazards in Badghis and Helmand provinces.
- In late February, USAID/OFDA provided \$2 million to WFP in support of the U.N. Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) operation, which provides air services to more than 300 humanitarian agencies and donors in Afghanistan. The funding follows a USAID/OFDA contribution of \$3 million to WFP for the UNHAS operation in FY 2011.
- During February, USAID/OFDA partner IOM assisted more than 1,700 families displaced or otherwise affected by natural hazards, primarily by providing emergency relief supplies in the form of family revitalization kits, winter kits, and emergency shelter kits. IOM drew from stockpiles of emergency relief supplies supplied by USAID/OFDA that had been pre-positioned in strategic locations throughout Afghanistan prior to the winter season.
- According to OCHA, the closure of the Afghanistan–Pakistan border since late November 2011 continues to delay the transit of emergency relief items destined for Afghanistan. As a result of the border closure, the humanitarian community is redirecting existing stocks of relief supplies in Afghanistan to areas with the most acute humanitarian needs and rerouting shipments that were en route from Pakistan through alternative crossings in other neighboring countries or by air.

Food Security

- The international humanitarian community continues to provide emergency food assistance to people affected by the failure of rain-fed wheat crops across 14 provinces in northern, northeastern, and western Afghanistan in 2011. USAID/FFP partner WFP continues to implement an Emergency Operation in Afghanistan to assist approximately 2.4 million food-insecure people until the primary 2012 harvest.
- In January, WFP provided more than 7,000 MT of food to food-insecure Afghans, delivering emergency food to more than 153,000 people including those newly displaced from natural hazards and conflict. WFP delivered an additional 1,600 MT of food to nearly 100,000 food-insecure people through food-for-work and food-for-assets projects.
- In February, the GIRoA Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livelihoods and members of the Food Security Cluster—the coordinating body for food security activities in Afghanistan—distributed 7,915 MT of wheat seed to benefit almost 1,100,000 farmers and their dependents in nearly 100 districts during the upcoming planting season, according to OCHA.

USAID AND STATE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN PROVIDED IN FY 2012¹

Implementing Partner	Activity	Location	Amount
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE²			
Information Management and Mine Action Programs (iMMAP)	Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management	Countrywide	\$1,998,075
IOM	Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management, Logistics and Relief Commodities	Countrywide	\$7,498,000
IRC	Logistics and Relief Commodities, Natural and Technological Risk Reduction, WASH	Badghis and Helmand Provinces	\$2,444,515
SC/US	Economic Recovery and Market Systems and Protection	Balkh and Bamyán Provinces	\$2,623,531
Tearfund	Economic Recovery and Market Systems	Jowzjan Province	\$394,687
WFP	Logistics and Relief Commodities	Countrywide	\$2,000,000
WHO	Health and Nutrition	Countrywide	\$1,200,000
ZOA	Economic Recovery and Market Systems	Sar-e-Pul Province	\$749,863
	Administrative Support		\$91,643
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE			\$19,000,314
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE³			
WFP	31,270 MT of Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$40,597,000
Implementing Partners	Locally and Regionally Procured Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$7,257,000
TOTAL USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE			\$47,854,000
STATE/PRM ASSISTANCE			
UNHCR	Humanitarian Assistance and Protection	Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran	\$6,437,000
Implementing Partners	Humanitarian Assistance	Countrywide	\$560,887
TOTAL STATE/PRM			\$6,997,887
TOTAL USAID AND STATE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN IN FY 2012			\$73,852,201

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds.

² USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of March 30, 2012.

³ Estimated value of food assistance

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for response efforts in Afghanistan can be found at www.interaction.org.
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
The Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org or +1.202.821.1999.
Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int.