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**BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)  
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

## ***Afghanistan – Complex Emergency***

Situation Report #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2009

April 21, 2009

### **BACKGROUND**

Adverse weather conditions, recurrent drought, and seismic activity contribute to frequent natural disasters in Afghanistan. For example, a drought in 2005 affected more than 6.3 million Afghans, and a severe winter emergency in 2008 killed nearly 900 people and 135,000 livestock in Afghanistan’s western provinces. In addition, ongoing conflict has perpetuated population displacement and humanitarian needs. The Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that at the height of the crisis, more than 8 million people had fled Afghanistan to escape violence or to seek economic opportunities. While noting the inability to accurately determine the total number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to limited access and sudden and repeated displacements, UNHCR estimated that approximately 270,000 IDPs resided in Afghanistan as of February 2009. The gradual withdrawal of humanitarian organizations from Afghanistan due to heightened insecurity has exacerbated the vulnerabilities of IDPs and strained host community resources. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan’s (GIROA) limited capacity to manage disaster risks and displacement has contributed to the country’s dependency on the international community for emergency assistance.

On October 20, 2008, U.S. Ambassador William B. Wood declared a disaster due to the effects of armed conflict and natural disasters in Afghanistan. In FY 2008 and to date in FY 2009, USAID/OFDA has provided nearly \$25.5 million in humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, bringing total USAID/OFDA assistance since FY 2002 to more than \$170 million. Ongoing FY 2008 and FY 2009 USAID/OFDA-funded programs provide emergency relief commodities, livelihoods support, disaster risk reduction (DRR) training, and improvements in shelter and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure to conflict- or disaster-affected individuals in 10 of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces.

<b>NUMBERS AT A GLANCE</b>	<b>SOURCE</b>	
<b>IDPs in Afghanistan</b>	270,000	UNHCR – February 2009
<b>Refugees in Neighboring Countries</b>	Approximately 2.6 million	UNHCR – November 2008
<b>Returnees to Afghanistan</b>	Approximately 5 million <sup>1</sup>	UNHCR – November 2008

### **USAID AND STATE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO DATE IN FY 2009**

<b>USAID/OFDA Assistance to Afghanistan .....</b>	<b>\$8,454,193</b>
<b>USAID/FFP<sup>2</sup> Assistance to Afghanistan .....</b>	<b>\$58,800,000</b>
<b>State/PRM<sup>3</sup> Assistance to Afghanistan .....</b>	<b>\$24,436,922</b>
<b>Total USAID and State Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan.....</b>	<b>\$91,691,115</b>

### **CURRENT SITUATION**

Populations in Afghanistan continue to suffer the effects of natural disasters, chronic displacement, food shortages, and increasing violence in provinces bordering Pakistan. USAID/OFDA’s non-governmental organization (NGO) partners express particular concern about ongoing displacement and lack of access in Helmand and Kandahar provinces. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), security conditions in Afghanistan are unlikely to improve in 2009.

In March and April, the USAID/OFDA senior humanitarian advisor visited Ghor Province and Kabul municipality to monitor implementing partner programs.

USAID/OFDA has also worked with other USG staff to improve capacity for identifying and addressing humanitarian needs.

International organizations report that since early 2008, significantly deteriorating security conditions in Afghanistan have caused further displacement and reduced the capability of humanitarian agencies to assess needs, assist vulnerable populations, and monitor assistance. UNHCR estimates that since 2005, up to 50,000 refugee returnees have remained unable to return to areas of origin due to security constraints, and have sought shelter in spontaneous camps in eastern

<sup>1</sup> This figure represents the number of UNHCR-assisted returns to Afghanistan between 2002 and 2008.

<sup>2</sup> USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP)

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM)

Afghanistan. The Overseas Development Institute reported in April that Afghanistan is second only to Sudan in terms of the number of violent incidents against humanitarian staff, largely perpetrated by armed opposition groups. Increased violence led to a nearly four-fold increase in humanitarian program suspensions in Afghanistan between 2007 and 2008. According to the U.N., approximately 20 percent of Afghanistan's 398 districts remain inaccessible to humanitarian workers due to security concerns.

### ***Logistics and Relief Commodities***

Six droughts in the last seven years and extreme weather conditions during the 2007/2008 winter have affected millions of vulnerable Afghans. The 2008/2009 winter, although milder than the previous winter, produced more than 15 major storms and heavy snowfalls. Furthermore, during the week of March 23, heavy rainfall and snowmelt led to flooding in central and southern Afghanistan, killing at least five people and damaging more than 500 houses. Repeated natural disasters in Afghanistan have resulted in the loss of livestock, seed stocks, and household assets. Implementing partners and beneficiaries report that coping strategies during crises included increased migration to seek work opportunities, selling of assets, and early marriage to offset indebtedness.

Ongoing USAID/OFDA programs support the provision of emergency relief supplies in response to needs caused by ongoing and potential disasters in 2009 and during the 2009/2010 winter. USAID/OFDA emergency response activities to date in FY 2009 include the provision of warm blankets to 23,400 individuals and winter kits to 4,000 households to help prevent displacement due to extreme winter weather.

### ***Shelter and Settlements***

Since 2001, Kabul municipality's population has increased from an estimated 1.5 million people to nearly 5 million, more than four times greater than existing infrastructure has the capacity to support. As a result, up to 80 percent of Kabul's population is living in unauthorized, informal, overcrowded, and under-serviced settlements.

To address emergency needs of more than 60,000 returnees, IDPs, and other vulnerable Kabul residents, USAID/OFDA has provided \$12.9 million to the second phase of the Kabul Area Shelter and Settlements program (KASS-2), designed to provide seismic-resistant transitional shelter. The first phase, which commenced in FY 2006 and was completed in FY 2007, provided shelter assistance to 3,774 households, or more than 26,000 people, as well as latrines, potable water, drainage systems, graveled roads, livelihoods, and training programs in health, sanitation, protection, and seismic hazard mitigation. The KASS-2 program also addresses livelihoods and WASH needs for nearly 100,000 additional Kabul residents.

### ***Economy and Market Systems***

According to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, approximately 80 percent of Afghans depend on agriculture for livelihoods and food security. However, Afghanistan's recurring natural disasters and ongoing conflict have eroded household asset bases and resulted in below-average harvests. In Ghor Province, for instance, local agricultural experts reported to USAID/OFDA field staff that last year's drought resulted in a 90 percent reduction in the 2007/2008 wheat crop harvest. USAID/FFP noted that seed and chemical fertilizer prices doubled between early 2007 and February 2009.

To date in FY 2009, USAID/OFDA has provided nearly \$5.2 million to support cash-for-work activities, an emergency vouchers program, and livestock replacement to benefit 13,000 drought-affected households. USAID/OFDA also provided nearly \$1.8 million in FY 2008 to help create livelihood opportunities in Kabul municipality as part of the KASS-2 project.

### ***Food Security***

Insecurity, high food prices, and drought have contributed to poor nutrition in Afghanistan, particularly among women and children. According to a joint survey by U.N. agencies and the GIROA, nearly 25 percent of lactating women are malnourished, and more than half of children under the age of five are stunted. According to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, food-insecure populations are generally concentrated in Kabul municipality and urban areas of Ghor, Herat, Ghazni, Balkh, and Badakhshan provinces, although food insecurity affects all of Afghanistan's provinces. In March, USAID/OFDA implementing partners in Ghor Province reported that program beneficiaries have frequently cited a need for basic food commodities despite food availability, indicating that the most vulnerable households cannot afford to purchase food and have exhausted food stocks prior to the August/September harvest.

To date in FY 2009, USAID/FFP has provided 62,190 metric tons (MT) of P.L. 480 Title II emergency food assistance, valued at approximately \$58.8 million, to WFP to respond to emergency situations nationwide.

### ***Population Movement and IDP and Refugee Returns***

Many of Afghanistan's estimated 270,000 IDPs reside in informal settlements in the south, west, and southeast of Afghanistan, where insecurity hampers efforts to provide sustained support. In addition, UNHCR has estimated that more than 2.6 million Afghan refugees remain in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Between 2002 and 2008, more than 5 million Afghan refugees returned to Afghanistan, approximately 278,000 of whom returned in 2008 alone, according to UNHCR. Although returns occurred in all of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, nearly half of returnees settled in Kabul municipality and Nangarhar Province. UNHCR expects an additional 220,000 Afghans to return in 2009. In

April, UNHCR resumed support for voluntary repatriation of registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan after a six-month suspension during the winter months.

To date in FY 2009, USAID/OFDA has provided more than \$8.4 million to support KASS-2 and other humanitarian programs, many of which help address the needs of Afghan IDPs and returnees. In addition, State/PRM supports UNHCR, ICRC, and a number of NGOs in reintegrating returnees to Afghanistan and in assisting refugees in countries of asylum. To date in FY 2009, State/PRM has contributed more than \$22.4 million to UNHCR and ICRC to support Afghan refugees. State/PRM has also programmed more than \$2 million to date in FY 2009 for NGO projects providing reintegration support within Afghanistan and basic services to refugees and host communities in Pakistan. State/PRM-funded projects focus on shelter, WASH, protection, health, and livelihoods support.

### ***Disaster Risk Reduction***

A July 2008 NGO assessment of 228 villages in six provinces demonstrated high hydro-meteorological and geological vulnerabilities. Moreover, the assessment results indicate that inaccessibility of many remote Afghan villages, particularly during inclement winter weather, compounds the effects of disasters in Afghanistan. According to USAID/OFDA implementing partners, Afghan community members remain the first responders to disasters and require training in disaster preparedness, management, and mitigation.

To build community capacity to respond to disasters, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$670,000 in FY 2009 to help integrate and improve local disaster preparedness programs. USAID/OFDA partners worked with 30 community-development councils to provide training on disaster assessment and response and promote school disaster preparedness. USAID/OFDA also provided nearly \$1.5 million in FY 2009 to promote community-based seismic awareness, preparedness, and mitigation projects in Kabul municipality as part of the KASS-2 project.

According to USAID/OFDA partners, the international community lacks reliable information on disaster vulnerabilities in Afghanistan. In response, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$75,000 in FY 2009 to develop a country risk assessment map. USAID/OFDA is also supporting the development and dissemination of village disaster management plans, along with other DRR material and activities.

## USAID AND STATE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO DATE IN FY 2009

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<b>USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE<sup>1</sup></b>			
International Organization for Migration (IOM) and various NGOs	Economy and Market Systems, Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management, Disaster Risk Reduction, Logistics/Relief Commodities	Countrywide, Kabul municipality, and Bamiyan, Ghor, Herat, Badakhshan, Kunduz, Badghis, Balkh, Day Kundi, and Baghlan provinces	\$8,316,268
IOM and various NGOs	Shelter and Settlements	Kabul municipality	\$122,881
	Administrative Support		\$15,044
<b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA</b>			<b>\$8,454,193</b>
<b>USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE<sup>2</sup></b>			
WFP	62,190 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$58,800,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/FFP</b>			<b>\$58,800,000</b>
<b>STATE/PRM ASSISTANCE</b>			
UNHCR and ICRC	Protection, Emergency Relief Supplies, Health, Shelter and Settlements, WASH, and Assistance to Conflict-Affected Populations, Returnees, and IDPs	Countrywide	\$22,434,000
Various NGOs	Health, Livelihood Recovery, WASH, Shelter and Settlements, and Assistance to Conflict-Affected Populations, Returnees, and IDPs	Balkh, Baghlan, Takhar, and Kunduz provinces	\$2,002,922
<b>TOTAL STATE/PRM</b>			<b>\$24,436,922</b>
<b>TOTAL USAID AND STATE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN IN FY 2009</b>			<b>\$91,691,115</b>

<sup>1</sup> USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of April 21, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> USAID/FFP funding represents the estimated value of emergency food assistance and does not include the provision of 5,230 MT of P.L. 480 Title II development food assistance, valued at \$6.3 million, to support health and livelihoods activities in Ghor Province.