



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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**Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA)
East Asia and Pacific Region, Regional Office for Asia-Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand**

DISASTER RESPONSE

Assisting Flood-Affected Communities in the Philippines

In early August, heavy monsoon rains intensified by two strong typhoons led to flooding and at least 100 deaths across the Philippines, including in the metropolitan Manila area, as well as Central Luzon and Calabarzon regions, affecting more than 3.4 million people and displacing 400,000 others by mid-August. The Government of the Philippines evacuated thousands of people from low-lying and other flood-prone areas to relief centers throughout the country.

On August 7, 2012, U.S. Ambassador Harry K. Thomas Jr. declared a disaster due to the effects of the floods. In response, USAID/OFDA provided an initial \$100,000 to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) for the distribution of emergency relief supplies benefiting 10,000 flood-affected people in the metropolitan Manila area. In the days following the U.S. disaster declaration, USAID/OFDA provided an additional \$300,000 to CRS for emergency relief and \$100,000 to the U.N. World Food Program for

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Residents of Manila navigate floodwaters in August. (Photo: Erin Magee, USAID/OFDA).

DISASTER RESPONSE

Responding to Flash Floods in Ambon

Heavy rains in the city of Ambon in eastern Indonesia resulted in flooding and landslides in early August, killing 10 people and displacing several thousand others.

To help alleviate the immediate emergency needs of affected populations, USAID/OFDA provided \$100,000 through USAID/Indonesia to Mercy Corps for the distribution of emergency relief commodities in Ambon. USAID/OFDA's existing relationship with Mercy Corps helped facilitate a rapid response.

In addition, a USAID/OFDA regional advisor traveled to Ambon and other flood-affected areas with the alternate U.S. mission disaster relief officer for Indonesia to assess humanitarian conditions, coordinate with local disaster response officials, and monitor relief operations.



A beneficiary in Ambon (Courtesy of Mercy Corps).

DISASTER RESPONSE

Meeting the Humanitarian Needs of Conflict-Displaced People in Burma

Separate conflicts in Burma's Rakhine and Kachin states have resulted in the displacement of more than 110,000 people since last fall. The displaced—who are living in temporary camps, among host communities, and in remote jungle areas—lack sufficient shelter, health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) materials.

In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$853,000 to the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) to assist displaced individuals with access to adequate WASH materials and services, and an additional \$150,000 to the U.N.

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to improve coordination of the humanitarian responses.

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USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor Brian Heidel discusses WASH assistance with an IDP camp resident in Rakhine State (Courtesy of USAID/Burma).

Assisting Flood-Affected Communities in the Philippines

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logistics support. The USAID/OFDA assistance helped families experiencing acute flooding stay healthy and recover more quickly from the disaster.

In addition, two USAID/OFDA staff members—a regional advisor and a program officer—were in the Philippines when heavy flooding began and were able to travel to affected areas to conduct assessments with staff from USAID/Philippines, the Australian Government Overseas Aid Program, and relief organizations on the ground.

DISASTER RESPONSE

Supporting Relief Agencies to Assist Flood-Affected Populations in China

A series of strong storms and typhoons sweeping over China between June and August caused widespread flooding and landslides, resulting in more than 900 deaths and affecting populations throughout the country.

Typhoons Damrey and Haihui were especially destructive, sweeping away or destroying homes and crops from south to north and affecting coastal and central provinces. Populations in Liaoning Province in northeastern China were particularly affected by flash floods.

The Government of the People's Republic of China (GoPRC) conducted a robust response, deploying personnel, relief commodities, and equipment to affected areas and conducting pre-emptory evacuations in areas forecast to be affected by flooding or landslides.

To demonstrate its support for GoPRC response efforts, USAID/OFDA provided a total of \$100,000 to the Red Cross Society of China and the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation for emergency relief commodities for flood-affected populations.

In addition, USAID/OFDA continues to support The Asia Foundation for disaster risk reduction activities in China, including capacity building for the National Institute of Emergency Management of the China National Administrative School, which provides training and research in disaster management to build broader Chinese disaster management capacity.

Meeting the Humanitarian Needs of Conflict-Displaced People in Burma (Continued from Page 1)

In addition, during July and August, USAID/OFDA staff conducted two separate trips—one to Rakhine State and one to Kachin State—to assess humanitarian conditions and determine additional response options.

In both Kachin and Rakhine, USAID/OFDA staff interviewed internally displaced persons (IDPs) and met with Government of Burma (GoB) agencies and relief organizations operating in affected areas to determine the IDPs' needs in WASH, shelter, and nutrition. USAID/OFDA plans to continue to monitor the humanitarian situation and discuss conditions with staff from the U.S. Embassy in Rangoon, USAID/Burma, other donor organizations, GoB agencies, U.N. agencies, and international and local non-governmental organizations.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Facilitating Enhanced ICS Activities in Thailand's Phuket Province

To help Thailand prepare for and manage the many hazards it faces, USAID/OFDA provides technical support and training in the Incident Command System (ICS). ICS is a pre-defined chain of command designed to provide a common framework within which response agencies can work together effectively. ICS has proved to be a critical tool for disaster management in the U.S. and throughout the world.

Building on lessons learned from the 2011 floods, USAID/OFDA is supporting ICS instruction for senior-level officials and increased ICS training for practitioners. In addition, on August 14, Thai disaster management officials named southern Thailand's Phuket Province a pilot province for enhanced ICS implementation for future disasters.

At the pilot province launch, officials from the Thai Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) and other relief and response organizations representing a total of 42 agencies signed a memorandum of understanding pledging to strengthen ICS activities in Phuket. Participants noted the historic opportunity presented by Phuket's commitment to ICS and emphasized the importance of senior-level buy-in for successful ICS implementation.

In addition, on August 24, the Emergency Medical Institute of Thailand jointly conducted an executive seminar in Bangkok on ICS for approximately 100 high-ranking Royal Thai Government (RTG) officials and executives. The trainings will complement RTG efforts to navigate future disasters in an effective and organized manner.

With USAID/OFDA support, the U.S. Forest Service began working with DDPM in 2010 through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – U.S. Disaster Management Cooperation Program, which aims to enhance ASEAN's capacity for disaster management integration of ICS into regional and national disaster management systems.



Thai disaster response officials at an ICS training in Phuket (Photo: Fiona Baker, USAID/OFDA).

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