



## Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, San José, Costa Rica

### DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



Photo courtesy of Lester Blackett, Nevis Disaster Management Department

**Representatives from the USAID/OFDA Regional Disaster Assistance Program (RDAP) and national disaster coordinators from various Caribbean countries discuss DRR priorities during a small group breakout session.**

### Caribbean Stakeholder Consultation Held

The countries of the Caribbean recently met to identify disaster risk reduction (DRR) priorities and opportunities for cooperation with USAID/OFDA and other institutions in the region.

USAID/OFDA and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) organized the DRR stakeholder consultation meeting, which brought together national disaster organizations, international donors, and other stakeholders from around the region. The meeting was held July 28 in Bridgetown, Barbados, the day after a meeting of CDEMA participating states.

USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor Sidney Velado provided meeting participants with an overview of the USAID/OFDA Regional DRR Strategy, which focuses on safeguarding livelihood assets, preventing shelter loss, and building capacity for disaster preparedness and risk reduction.

"We want to share with everyone the specific activities that we have prioritized in our strategy and how they fit into the Hyogo Frame-

work for Action," Velado explained.

Also during the meeting, U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) representative William "Ike" Clark briefed participants on the U.S. military's humanitarian assistance priorities in the Caribbean. CDEMA Senior Program Officer Saudia Rahat provided an overview of the Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy and the CDEMA Participating States Work Program Analysis. Ricardo Mena, Director of the Regional Office of the U.N. International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (ISDR), also discussed ISDR programming support for the region.

Participants then divided into small groups to review their country's or organization's priorities, assess links to USAID/OFDA's strategy, and analyze opportunities for institutional cooperation.

The groups identified a number of shared priorities among many of the Caribbean countries, including: human resource strengthening; capacity building and training in school

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### DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

### USAID/OFDA Meets with Strategic Partners in Peru

On July 26, USAID/OFDA staff participated in a meeting with the Government of Peru National Institute for Civil Defense (INDECI) and other strategic partners in Peru to review accomplishments in DRR, preparedness, and response.

The U.N., Swiss cooperation agency COSUDE, and members of the Peruvian National Humanitarian Network also participated in the meeting, which was held in Lima.

Following the meeting, representatives from USAID/OFDA and COSUDE recognized INDECI for its leadership in strengthening the country's disaster management and response system during the past five years.

USAID/OFDA and INDECI representatives also reviewed activities completed and planned under the memorandum of understanding that the two organizations signed on January 8, 2010.

Since the partnership began, USAID/OFDA has assisted INDECI and its partners, such as the Peruvian Volunteer Firefighters Corps, with training, financial support, and technical assistance to strengthen capacity in urban search and rescue, damage evaluation and needs analysis, the incident command system, and response preparedness activities.

Beginning last year, USAID/OFDA, through the RDAP, organized annual meetings with national disaster organizations and other stakeholders in each country where the RDAP operates in order to review training and technical assistance program accomplishments and define priorities with national counterparts.



Photo courtesy of INDECI

**USAID/OFDA staff with outgoing INDECI director Luis F. Palomino (in orange jacket) during the stakeholder meeting in Peru in July.**

## NEWS NOTES

### Two New RDAP Courses Become Available

The RDAP has added two new Spanish-language courses to its disaster management training portfolio.

The "Emergency Operations Center Management Course" provides emergency workers with the basic knowledge and skills to effectively manage an Emergency Operations Center.

The "Effective Use of Water to Extinguish Forest Fires Course" provides firefighters with the basic knowledge and skills required to successfully operate USAID/OFDA-provided pumps and accessories to extinguish forest fires.

Additional information, including the reference materials and pre-work documents for these and all RDAP courses, is available on the USAID web site: [www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/disaster\\_assistance/publications/prep\\_mit/RDAP\\_training/index.html](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/publications/prep_mit/RDAP_training/index.html).

### New Team Members Join USAID/OFDA/LAC

USAID/OFDA extends a warm welcome to two new team members in the LAC region.

New Program Officer Katherine Reid will join the team in San José, Costa Rica, on September 1.

Reid has worked in the international development and relief field for more than 10 years with various U.N. agencies and international humanitarian organizations in the Balkans, Belarus, Pakistan, and Sudan.

Disaster response specialist Steve McAndrew arrived in early August to assist the LAC team with response activities through the end of the 2011 hurricane season.

McAndrew has more than 12 years of international disaster response experience, most recently as Head of Operations for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Haiti Operation.

In addition, Kathleen Martin departed in June; former Disaster Operations Specialist Greg Elder is now serving as Acting Regional Coordinator for the LAC team at the USAID/OFDA headquarters in Washington, D.C.



Photo courtesy of Lester Blackett, Nevis Disaster Management Department

**Disaster managers from throughout the Caribbean participate in a meeting to review USAID/OFDA and CDEMA's comprehensive disaster management priorities.**

## Caribbean DRR Priorities Reviewed

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safety, shelter management, emergency operations center management, and search and rescue activities; and technical assistance for areas such as hazard mapping, early warning systems, public awareness campaigns, community risk profiling and resilience building, and emergency telecommunication enhancement.

Opportunities for institutional cooperation identified during the stakeholder consultation include the harmonization of resources and project mapping to ensure that in each country, the national disaster organization, international donors, and non-governmental organizations work together to meet the country's priority DRR needs.

Earlier this year, USAID/OFDA held a similar DRR consultation meeting in Guatemala in collaboration with the Central American Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters for stakeholders in Central America. Next year, USAID/OFDA plans to hold a consultation meeting for South American stakeholders, in collaboration with the Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Response.

## DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

### RDAP Supports Forest Firefighter Mobilization Exercise in Colombia

More than 225 Colombian firefighters participated in the Fourth National Forest Firefighter Brigade Mobilization Exercise held in Envigado, Antioquia Department, from July 28 to 31. Several firefighters from Costa Rica and Bolivia also participated in the event, thanks to RDAP support.

The RDAP provided technical assistance and funding to the Envigado Volunteer Firefighters Corps to carry out the exercise, which helped various organizations involved in managing forest fires to renew ties, establish new partnerships, and share experiences.

*Colombian firefighters participate in the mobilization exercise in late July.*



Photo by Luisa Alfaro, USAID/OFDA

## COMING UP

### Technical Assistance for DRR in Education

From August 29 to September 2, disaster risk management specialists (DRMS) Manuel Ramírez and Mariela Chavarriga will provide technical assistance on DRR in education to the Adventist National University and Adventist Education Network in Chile.

### Assistance to Develop Forest Fire Strategy

From September 5 to 9, DRMS Luisa Alfaro and Fernando Calderón will provide technical assistance to Costa Rica's National System of Conservation Areas to develop a National Strategy on Comprehensive Forest Fire Management.

### Joint Humanitarian Operations Course

From September 12 to 13, USAID/OFDA will provide a Joint Humanitarian Operations Course to SOUTHCOM staff in Miami, Florida, to review ways to cooperate more efficiently during joint disaster response operations.

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