



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

DISASTER RESPONSE



Photo by Diedra Spencer, USAID/OFDA

USAID/DART member Ricardo Herrera (right) with the first beneficiary family that received a USAID/OFDA shelter after the February 27 earthquake in Chile. The family lives in Cauquenes Province of Maule Region.

Helping Chile Move toward Recovery

In response to the 8.8 magnitude earthquake that struck Chile on February 27, a 16-member USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (USAID/DART) deployed to Santiago and affected areas along the coast to help meet some of the primary needs identified by the Government of Chile (GoC) following the disaster.

The earthquake and subsequent tsunami caused at least 452 deaths, with around 300 others reported missing, affected approximately 1.8 million people, and caused significant damage to infrastructure. According to the

U.S. Geological Survey, more than 20 aftershocks of magnitude 5.0 or higher have occurred in Chile since February 27, including more than 20 earthquakes of magnitude 6.0 or higher.

As of March 25, the U.S. Government (USG) had provided nearly \$14 million in humanitarian assistance to Chile in response to the effects of the earthquake, including more than \$12 million from USAID/OFDA and \$1 million from the U.S. Department of Defense. The assistance includes the deployment of a USAID/OFDA-funded

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Damage in Pelluhue town, Maule Region, from the tsunami that followed the 8.8 magnitude earthquake. At least 160,000 houses have been irreparably damaged or destroyed by the February 27 earthquake and severe aftershocks.



Photo by Larry Sacks, USAID/Peru

DISASTER RESPONSE

Haiti Assistance Continues

The USAID/DART in Haiti continues to provide assistance to earthquake-affected families.

As of March 26, the U.S. Government had provided more than \$934 million in assistance to Haiti since the January 12 earthquake, including nearly \$353 million from USAID/OFDA.

Current efforts focus on continuing the distribution of food and shelter materials and facilitating rubble removal, latrine construction, and waste removal through cash-for-work programs.

USAID/OFDA specialists helped to develop a transitional shelter model suitable for Haiti, and provided plastic sheeting benefiting an estimated 911,500 people – approximately two-thirds of the 1.3 million people in need. USAID/OFDA is also supporting a seed system security assessment to identify potential planting season needs.

The USAID/DART is also coordinating with the Government of Haiti and local partners to address potential needs related to the upcoming rainy and hurricane seasons.



Photo by Robert J. Fluegel, U.S. Navy

A Haitian man removes rubble from a quake-damaged building in Port-au-Prince as part of USAID-supported cash-for-work programs.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

New Risk Management Specialist To Coordinate the RDAP in Chile

The USAID/OFDA Regional Disaster Assistance Program (RDAP) extends a warm welcome to new disaster risk management specialist Mariela Chavarriga, who will coordinate program activities in Chile. The Santiago-based specialist has 10 years of experience as a risk management professional. As the national coordinator of Chile's Humanitarian Emergency Assistance Program, she led responses to the Copahue Volcano eruption in 2000, drought in 2003, and floods in 2002-2004.

COMING UP

U.S. National Hurricane Conference

Four USAID/OFDA disaster risk management specialists from the Caribbean region are participating in the 2010 National Hurricane Conference in Orlando, Florida, from March 29 to April 2.

MOU with Belize Ministry of Education

USAID/OFDA Senior Regional Advisor Tim Callaghan plans to travel to Belize with disaster risk management specialist Beryl Armbrister to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Belize Ministry of Education on April 6. The MOU will facilitate cooperation between education officials and USAID/OFDA to advance the school safety program.

National ICS Forum in Colombia

Colombia-based USAID/OFDA disaster risk management specialist Juan Carlos Lobo is providing technical assistance for the National Incident Command System (ICS) Forum in Colombia on April 8 and 9. The forum will review the USAID/OFDA-promoted ICS, which helps facilitate more efficient inter-agency responses to emergency situations.

Meeting with Partners in El Salvador

El Salvador-based disaster risk management specialist Sergio David Gutiérrez will meet with key partners in El Salvador on April 9 to discuss USAID/OFDA's strategic vision for disaster risk management work in the country.

Hemispheric DRR Conference in Colombia

USAID/OFDA Senior Regional Advisor Tim Callaghan, RDAP Technical Manager Fabián Arellano, and disaster risk management specialist Juan Carlos Lobo plan to participate in the II Hemispheric Conference on National Mechanisms and Networks for Risk Reduction, "*Encuentro de Santa Marta: De la teoría a la práctica*," from April 14 to 16. The event is organized by the Organization of American States, U.N. International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and Government of Colombia.

Colombia USAR Team Evaluation

USAID/OFDA is supporting the external evaluation of the Bogotá Firefighters Corps urban search and rescue (USAR) team. The evaluation, scheduled from April 14 to 17, is part of the domestic USAR team accreditation process proposed by the Americas chapter of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG). USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor Rene Carrillo plans to travel to Colombia for the evaluation.



Photo courtesy of the Bogotá Firefighters Corps

The Bogotá Firefighters Corps USAR team works in Haiti after the earthquake.

Hazardous Materials Analysis in Guatemala

USAID/OFDA disaster risk management specialist Ricardo Berganza is assisting Guatemala's National Coordinator for Disaster Reduction to organize a workshop on April 21 to analyze the risk of incidents involving hazardous materials and ways to reduce and prepare for these risks.



Photo by Carlos Córdova, USAID/OFDA

USAID/DART leader Sidney Velado opens one of the mobile water treatment units that USAID/OFDA donated to Chilean emergency response officials in Cauquenes Province after the earthquake.

USAID/OFDA Assistance to Chile

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U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Medical Support (EMEDS) field hospital and medical team, the use of two C-130 Hercules cargo aircraft and crew to transport emergency supplies to affected areas, \$1.4 million to the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), \$1 million to support the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the provision and transport of mobile water treatment units, medium-duty generators, and rolls of plastic sheeting from the USAID/OFDA warehouse in Miami, Florida, to Chile.

The EMEDS was set up and continues to provide medical services, including surgeries, in Angol town, La Araucanía Region – where the earthquake severely damaged a local 190-bed hospital. The mobile unit, composed of six tents, medical equipment, and supplies, has the capacity to provide general medical care, laboratory, radiology, pharmacy, and dental services to affected populations. In addition, USAID/OFDA procured four large, heavy-duty tents to expand the capacity of the field hospital.

U.S. medical and support personnel worked alongside local physicians and medical staff for approximately two weeks to ensure a smooth transition before the U.S. team departed Chile and the facilities were handed over to the GoC Ministry of Health in late March.

The USAID/DART deployed field teams to Maule and BioBio regions to conduct assessments and identify needs in disaster-affected areas. These teams provided assistance to local emergency workers and volunteers to build USAID/OFDA-designed transitional shelters utilizing USAID/OFDA plastic sheeting and locally procured supplies. USAID/OFDA is now working with ADRA to continue building transitional shelters in Maule and BioBio regions.

Additionally, the USG made available 113 satellite phones to facilitate communications until telephone networks in affected areas are repaired.

During the response, U.S. Ambassador Paul E. Simons and USAID/DART leader Sidney Velado coordinated closely with the newly appointed heads of the GoC Emergency Committee and the GoC Reconstruction Committee.

"The Chilean people have an amazing spirit of solidarity. Even though their homes were destroyed, they are very resilient and have a strong will to overcome this disaster," Velado said. "The government is committed to helping the people and has the political will and funding to do so."

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