



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

DISASTER RESPONSE

USAID/OFDA Provides Disaster Relief to Flood-Affected Individuals in Pakistan

Working through new and existing awardees, USAID/OFDA has rapidly expanded emergency assistance in Pakistan to meet the immediate needs of flood-affected individuals. A USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (USAID/DART), activated on August 8, remains in Pakistan to assess humanitarian conditions and coordinate U.S. Government (USG) relief efforts in cooperation with the Government of Pakistan (GoP), U.N. agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Since late July, heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding has affected nearly 65 percent of districts in Pakistan, killing nearly 1,700 people, affecting approximately 18 million others, and damaging 3.6 million hectares of agricultural land, according to the GoP National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

As of September 1, the USG had committed \$200 million in assistance to Pakistan, including more than \$70 million from USAID/OFDA to meet emergency health, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene needs. USAID/OFDA programs aim to protect the health status of flood-affected populations by expanding and strengthening disease surveillance and response systems and increasing access to potable water and hygiene promotion activities.

USAID/OFDA-funded activities also aim to meet shelter needs and support recovery of affected populations' livelihoods.



The International Organization for Migration (IOM) distributes USAID/OFDA-provided emergency relief supplies to flood-affected communities (Photo courtesy of IOM).

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DISASTER RESPONSE

USAID/OFDA Staff Visit Cyclone Aila Response Activities in Bangladesh



A child looks out from a USAID/OFDA-funded CRS transitional shelter (Photo by Rob Friedman).

From June 28 to July 2, USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor (RA) for South Asia Rob Friedman traveled to Satkhira, Bangladesh, to visit USAID/OFDA-funded humanitarian programs implemented following Cyclone Aila. According to the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), the cyclone, which hit coastal divisions of Bangladesh in May 2009, killed 190 people, injured 7,100 others, and affected approximately 4.8 million individuals in 11 southern districts. The cyclone also damaged or destroyed more than 500,000 houses and approximately 350,000 acres of agricultural land.

In response, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$3.6 million to support cyclone-affected individuals in Fiscal Year 2009, including funding for transitional shelter, latrine construction, and cash-for-work activities, as well as provision of emergency relief supplies, targeting a total of 70,000 beneficiaries.

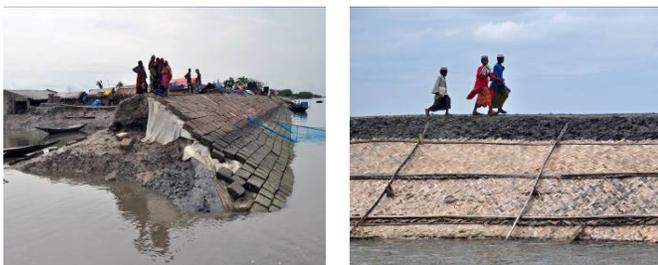
During the visit to Bangladesh, Friedman met with USAID/OFDA grantee Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and local NGO Caritas Bangladesh to discuss ongoing activities. With USAID/OFDA funding, CRS is

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Cyclone Response Activities in Bangladesh (Continued from Page 1)

constructing transitional shelters and disaster-resistant latrines, reinforcing existing shelters, and supporting cash-for-work and hygiene promotion activities for more than 20,000 cyclone-affected individuals (See text box below).

The South Asia RA also visited embankments damaged by Cyclone Aila to observe progress on reconstruction. As of early July, the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) had repaired most cyclone-damaged embankments. Due to extensive damage to embankments in some areas, the BWDB also built smaller, weaker ring embankments further inland. The GoB reported plans to address major embankment breaches and the weaker ring embankments during the upcoming dry season.



Left: Flowing water through broken embankments causes additional erosion, damaging houses and farmland. Right: Reinforced embankments help to mitigate future damage (Photos by Rob Friedman, USAID/OFDA).

DISASTER RESPONSE

Participatory Approach to Beneficiary Selection in Bangladesh Gains Praise, Empowering the Local Community

Through the Cyclone Aila response, USAID/OFDA grantee CRS and partner Caritas Bangladesh successfully piloted a participatory beneficiary selection process, enabling community members to select individuals from within the community to receive shelters or participate in cash-for-work activities in an open-air forum. During the day-long meetings, beneficiaries were nominated one-by-one by their peers and invited to state their case, followed by a “yea” or “nay” vote. After surveying the chosen beneficiaries to ensure that the individuals fit the selection criteria, the NGOs read the final list aloud and posted it in each community. To elicit feedback on the lists, the NGOs provided community members with feedback mechanisms, including a complaint box at each display site. CRS reported a positive response from the selection process and highlighted that other NGOs working in Bangladesh have invited CRS and Caritas Bangladesh to present the process to their organizations.

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USAID/OFDA Responds to Floods in Pakistan

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“We’re working closely with General Nadeem and his team at the NDMA. They’re working diligently under the incredible pressure of the enormous needs of the people affected by the flooding...We’re supporting their efforts with every resource at our disposal,” said USAID/DART leader and USAID/OFDA South Asia Principal Regional Advisor Bill Berger. USAID/OFDA also activated a Washington, D.C.-based Response Management Team to support the team in Pakistan.

Following disasters—particularly floods—spread of diseases, such as malaria and acute watery diarrhea, constitute a significant concern. To help prevent increased morbidity and mortality caused by disease, USAID is expanding health efforts and the provision of safe drinking water. “Because we know that waterborne illnesses can lead to severe dehydration and death without proper treatment and prevention, preventing and containing a disease outbreak is vital in this response,” stated Berger. As of late August, USAID/OFDA was providing an estimated 60,000 people with 5 liters of potable water per day through portable water filtration units shipped within the first hours of the onset of the floods.



A USAID/OFDA-supported grantee operates a mobile health clinic in flood-affected Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan, treating hundreds of patients daily.

USAID/OFDA has also provided funding to establish more than 60 U.N. World Health Organization diarrhea treatment centers in 46 of the most-affected districts, as well as supported 37 medical teams to provide emergency medical services to affected individuals. Through funding to the Disease Early Warning System, USAID/OFDA is monitoring communicable infections and diseases among approximately 9 million people in flood-affected areas.

To meet the shelter needs of affected individuals, USAID/OFDA has also transported more than 5,000 rolls of plastic sheeting to Pakistan, sufficient for nearly 152,000 people. “The plastic sheeting is so durable that people affected by the earthquake (in 2005) that were provided this plastic sheeting are still using it today.” Berger added. Additional supplies are expected to arrive in the coming weeks.