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

Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands

Fact Sheet #2, Fiscal Year (FY) 2011

June 28, 2011

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- From June 11 to 16, USAID/OFDA Director Mark Bartolini traveled to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) to observe ongoing USAID/OFDA disaster risk reduction (DRR) programs in the island nations. Prior to his visit, the USAID/OFDA Director met with federal partners in Hawaii for an overview of the Compact of Free Association and Operational Blueprint—the USAID and U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) framework for disaster mitigation, relief, and reconstruction in FSM and RMI. The USAID/OFDA Director’s visit to FSM and RMI preceded his participation in a USAID/OFDA-led DRR conference in Bangkok on June 21 and 22 that focused on DRR for Asian Pacific Rim countries.
- To date in FY 2011, the USAID Disaster Assistance Coordinator (DAC) for FSM and RMI has monitored a tropical storm, king tides, and a potential tsunami in FSM and RMI. Through close coordination with local and national authorities, the relevant U.S. embassies, and relief agencies on the ground, the DAC was able to quickly communicate to USG counterparts in the region and in Washington, D.C., that the disasters did not exceed local capacity to respond.
- USAID/OFDA has provided \$320,000 in FY 2011 through USAID/Philippines to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to preposition emergency relief supplies in three strategic locations in FSM and RMI. Commodities include communications equipment, water purification technologies, water storage solutions, tarpaulins, health kits, medical supplies for field hospitals, and generators. IOM is USAID’s primary relief and reconstruction partner in FSM and RMI.

CONTEXT

- In November 2008, USAID assumed responsibility for disaster response and reconstruction in FSM and RMI from FEMA, reflecting the transition of FSM and RMI from U.S.-administered trust territories to independent countries. USAID and FEMA developed an Operational Blueprint to provide a framework for USG disaster response and reconstruction in the two nations, under which USAID maintains FEMA’s previous commitment to supplementing host government efforts as necessary to provide humanitarian assistance in the aftermath of significant disasters in the two nations.
- Under the Blueprint, USAID maintains a full-time presence in FSM and RMI through the USAID DAC. Located in Majuro, RMI, and working as a part of the U.S. Embassy country teams in both FSM and RMI, the DAC serves as a liaison with host governments and coordinates USG relief activities in FSM and RMI. USAID coordinates both relief and reconstruction in the two countries, with USAID/OFDA taking the lead on humanitarian assistance and USAID/Philippines heading recovery efforts.
- An important pillar of USAID’s disaster mitigation, relief, and reconstruction program is a cooperative agreement between USAID and IOM, which maintains offices in Pohnpei and Yap states, FSM, and Majuro, RMI.

King Tides

- From late January to early February, waves from the annual spring high tides—known locally as king tides—inundated two outer island atolls in RMI and several islands in Pohnpei State, FSM. Local authorities in affected areas of RMI reported that the waves damaged houses; compromised public sewers, water systems, and a fresh water catchment system; and damaged crops, with saltwater intrusion reported in taro patches. As a result of flood damages, authorities in Kili—one of the affected atolls—requested disaster assistance funds from the Government of RMI (GoRMI).
- In mid-February, the USAID DAC joined a GoRMI assessment team to evaluate damages in Kili. While the floods caused damage to several houses and resulted in limited agriculture and livestock losses, the USAID DAC concluded that the damages were not of sufficient magnitude for the GoRMI to declare a state of disaster or use emergency funds available under the joint USG-GoRMI disaster assistance emergency fund.

Tsunami and Storm Monitoring

- After the March 11 magnitude 9.0 earthquake in Japan generated a widespread tsunami, USAID/OFDA monitored a tsunami warning issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center for multiple countries in Asia, including FSM and RMI. In preparation for the possible tsunami, both U.S. embassies stood up internal emergency operations mechanisms; however, the two-foot wave surge that was reported in both FSM and RMI arrived at low tide and posed no threat.
- USAID/OFDA also monitored a tropical storm that passed over Yap State, FSM, in mid-May with wind speeds of more than 40 miles per hour. From May 20 to 22, USAID/OFDA hosted four conference calls convening key stakeholders—including U.S. Ambassador Peter A. Prahar and representatives from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and IOM—to share up-to-date information on the effects of strong winds and potential flooding. Local officials reported that the storm did not cause significant damage, and FSM did not request international assistance in response to the storm.

Disaster Preparedness

- USAID/OFDA supports disaster preparedness in FSM and RMI through capacity building activities for local and national government officials by way of The Asia Foundation's (TAF) Pacific Islands Disaster Risk Management Program 2. In FY 2011, USAID/OFDA awarded \$750,000 to TAF's three-year program for national and regional disaster management trainings in FSM and RMI, as well as 12 other South Pacific nations. The program also includes initiatives to develop and adapt training materials relevant to the region for use by national governments.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. Information on organizations responding to the humanitarian situation in FSM and RMI may be available at www.reliefweb.int.
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, warehouse space, etc); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID: www.usaid.gov – Keyword: Donations
 - The Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org or (703) 276-1914
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int