



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for
International
Development

Washington D.C.
20523

BELIZE - Hurricane Greta

Data

Date: September 18, 1978 (FY 78)

Location: Belize City, Dangriga (Stann Creek District), Cayo area

No. Dead: 5

No. Affected: 5,000 in Belize City and 1,000 in Dangriga in need of assistance

Damage: Estimated at \$6 million; 150 houses destroyed and 300 damaged; water and electrical systems severely damaged in Belize City; overflow of Canals in Belize City left sewer mud everywhere, seawalls damaged; estimated 99% of the grapefruit crop, 60% of the orange crop, and 100% of the banana crop damaged; damage to subsistence crops

The Disaster

On September 17, 1978, the Miami Hurricane Center issued an advisory stating that Hurricane Greta was headed for the coast of Belize. Hurricane Greta struck the east coast of Belize on September 18, with the eye of the storm passing just north of Dangriga in the Stann Creek District. In Stann Creek, winds gusted to nearly 100 mph and were sustained at 85 mph, while in Belize City winds peaked at 90 mph and were sustained at 65-70 mph. However, the greatest damage came from flooding rather than wind.

Flash flooding washed out roads, culverts, and crops. Water from wells and rivers quickly became contaminated, and a typhoid epidemic was feared in Belize City. Of particular concern were shortages of food in Dangriga, Gales Point, Mullins River, Hopkins, Silk Grass, and the small communities along the Sibun and Sittee Rivers.

Action Taken by the Government of Belize (GOB)

Broadcasts of hurricane warnings by the GOB provided adequate time for preparation and evacuation, thus limiting the death toll to five. GOB officials also worked closely with British and U.S. Government personnel to assess the situation and determine needs. Restoration of water, electrical, and telephone systems began immediately after the hurricane passed over Belize. Unfortunately, the heavy earthmoving equipment brought in to clean up Belize City further damaged the city's water main.

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Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

On September 21, 1978, the U.S. Consul General in Belize, Beauveau Nalle, determined that a disaster had occurred of such magnitude as to warrant USG assistance for Belize. Funds from the International Disaster Assistance account were used to purchase 1,000 bags of cement and 250 cases of canned milk, as well as to cover transport costs and local expenses.....\$7,572

On September 21, a C-130 aircraft airlifted from the Panama Canal Zone to Belize City two kW generators, with spare parts, and 200 rolls of plastic sheeting. Two Department of Defense technicians accompanied the generators to provide operational support, and another technician arrived later. A second airlift on September 27 delivered 4,000 pounds of dried red beans, 200 pounds of tea, water purification tablets, and various medicines including ampicillin, tetracycline, and antivenin. Additional ampicillin was air freighted from the United States. The cost for the airlift, supplies, medicine, and manpower came to.....\$36,309

CARE was authorized to divert 9,000 pounds of bulgar, 7,000 pounds of flour, and 6,000 pounds of vegetable oil from its regular P.L. 480 Title II program in Honduras to an emergency feeding program for the hurricane victims in Belize. The value of the diverted foodstuffs was put at.....\$11,315

TOTAL \$55,196

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies *

CARE/Belize provided 110 cases of baby food (\$2,200), seven cartons of vitamins (\$5,064), 33 cartons of plastic caps (\$876), and 3,603 used school books, total value of \$8,140

Church World Service sent \$5,000 to the Belize Christian Social Council for the purchase of seed corn. An appeal for \$200,000 to carry out rehabilitative activities in Belize and Honduras was issued \$5,000

TOTAL \$13,140

Assistance Provided by the International Community *

Caribbean Council of Churches - grant to the Belize Christian Social Council for relief efforts of \$5,000

Pan American Health Organization - 5,000 doses of tetanus toxoid, 6,000 syringes and needles, 50 portable vaccine carriers, and 20,000 aspirin tablets, all valued at \$1,500 (f.o.b.)

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United Kingdom - one generator, medicines, water purification unit, reconnaissance aid, and the services of a British Royal Air Force Puma helicopter to transport the USG - supplied generators to Dangriga, all at a cost of approximately \$190,475

United Kingdom Red Cross - some clothing and blankets.

TOTAL \$196,975

* Please note: the figures for total U.S. voluntary agency and international assistance are an approximation. In many cases the cash value of in kind aid is unavailable.