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FACT SHEET

Displaced and Vulnerable Groups Assistance Program

BACKGROUND

Decades of widespread violence by guerrilla groups and paramilitary forces competing for land and drug trafficking routes have caused millions of Colombians to flee their homes in search of safety. Most flee to nearby villages and towns, while others displace immediately to one of Colombia's five largest cities. UNHCR estimates that over 3.4 million persons were displaced between 1985 and 2003, out of a total population of 45 million, creating one of the largest internally displaced population in the world. There are discrepancies in the numbers, however, with fewer than 2 million formally registered with the Government of Colombia (GOC).

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The GOC receives support for internally displaced persons (IDP) programs from two U.S. Government agencies: the Department of State's Office of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). PRM provides funding for emergency assistance to families and individuals during their first 90 days of displacement. Once this emergency phase has concluded, USAID's assistance program dovetails in to provide medium- and longer-term assistance to the displaced until they can return to their homes or be resettled. Since 2001, the USAID program has focused on the following objectives:

- Generate income and employment through job training, business development, and complementary activities.
- Institutional strengthening of Colombian NGOs and government entities at all levels that provide services to IDPs and other vulnerable groups.
- Technical assistance, training and follow-up for housing improvements and construction subsidies from the central government.
- Increase access to quality education at all levels, but especially at the primary level.
- Improve access to health care, potable water, and sanitation for IDPs and vulnerable groups.
- Facilitate reintegration, resettlement, and/or return of internally displaced families with sound livelihood options and access to critical social services.
- Strengthen and improve the coordination between institutional and community efforts in support of IDPs and receptor communities.
- Improve food security for IDPs and vulnerable groups.
- Provide health education to educate families in food preparation, nutrition, child-care, and sexual and reproductive health issues.
- Improve viable land market access for IDPs and vulnerable groups.

RESULTS ACHIEVED UNDER THIS PROGRAM (as of 09/30/07)

- Activities being implemented in 170 municipalities.
- In 2007, more than 500,000 vulnerable and displaced people benefited from USG assistance.
- More than 67,000 men, women and children participated in food security programs.
- Educational opportunities were provided to more than 50,000 children and over 240,000 people received much-needed health care services.