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**U.S. Contributions to the Response to Pakistan's Humanitarian Crisis:
The Situation and the Stakes**

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Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
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On behalf of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), I want to express our appreciation for the opportunity to discuss the agency's recent humanitarian assistance efforts in response to significant population displacement within Pakistan.

USAID and Humanitarian Assistance to Internal Displacement in Pakistan

USAID is the lead U.S. Government agency for addressing internal population displacement. With its strong operational presence in the field and decades of experience responding to a broad range of complex emergencies, natural disasters, and post-conflict situations throughout the world, USAID is at the forefront of the humanitarian community's effort to place greater emphasis on protection during the immediate humanitarian response to population displacement, as well as during the longer-term transition toward development and stability.

No single donor or organization-including USAID-possesses sufficient resources to address all of the needs associated with internal displacement in every situation. Since USAID adopted an agency-wide policy for internally displaced persons in October 2004, we have worked with other U.S. Government partners, United Nations organizations, international organizations, bilateral donors, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to mobilize resources needed for an effective response, including emergency relief, transitional assistance, reintegration and resettlement, and long-term development assistance.

A broad and integrated approach is required to reduce the human costs of population displacement and resume progress toward long-term development. The provision of coherent, comprehensive assistance and a durable solution to internal displacement is a USAID priority.

U.S. Government Response to the Current Situation in Pakistan

In response to significant and evolving humanitarian needs among displaced populations, the U.S. Government has provided to date over \$168 million in assistance to conflict-affected populations in Pakistan in Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 and to date in FY 2009, including nearly \$124 million in USAID assistance.

Renewed conflict beginning late April, between Pakistani Taliban insurgents and Government of Pakistan (GoP) forces in Swat, Lower Dir, and Buner districts, North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), has caused significant internal population displacement in Pakistan. According to the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of June 11, approximately 1.9 million officially registered individuals had been internally displaced in NWFP and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). UNHCR estimates that an additional 300,000 internally displaced individuals are residing outside NWFP and FATA, particularly in Punjab and Sindh provinces. Humanitarian organizations also expect current GoP operations in North and South Waziristan, in FATA, to displace an additional 200,000 individuals.

USAID identifies priority interventions based on humanitarian assessments conducted by field staff, U.N. agencies, and NGO partners. Currently, USAID is working through U.N. and NGO partners to support life-saving assistance, including emergency health interventions, logistical support, emergency food assistance, shelter materials, relief supplies, safe drinking water, and sanitation and hygiene facilities. In addition, USAID-funded interventions include livelihood support and early recovery assistance to reduce the economic impact of displacement in NWFP and FATA. To support GoP relief efforts, manage the increased humanitarian response, and encourage better U.N. agency and international community coordination, USAID has deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to Pakistan, supported by a Washington D.C.-based Response Management Team (RMT).

In addition to USAID assistance, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM), and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) are providing assistance to Pakistan. To date in FY 2009, USDA has provided 50,000 metric tons of Food for Progress assistance, valued at \$16.8 million as of June 16, through the World Food Program for distribution to conflict-affected populations. In FY 2009, State/PRM has provided \$24.6 million to UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to support the provision of relief commodities, as well as health, protection, humanitarian coordination, shelter and settlements, and water, sanitation, and hygiene activities. To date in FY 2009, DoD has provided approximately \$3.8 million in humanitarian assistance to Pakistan, including halal meals, air-conditioned tents, and generators.

Addressing the Needs of Populations Residing Outside Camps

Internally displaced persons in Pakistan have largely sought shelter with host communities. According to U.N. agencies, relatives, friends, and strangers have opened homes to approximately 80 percent of displaced individuals, straining most families' already limited resources. Humanitarian agencies have established a network of hubs to provide for this population but note challenges in providing assistance to displaced individuals residing in host communities, as these individuals are more widely dispersed and may be more difficult to identify. As the current crisis is in its second month, host families are encountering diminished resources to support displaced person families, resulting in increasing numbers of individuals moving to displaced person camps.

To support families with already scarce resources and populations residing outside of camps, creative and flexible solutions are needed. Sometimes these have included cash stipends or vouchers as the only practicable way to provide needed support. Recognizing this need, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) has provided \$45 vouchers per household to approximately 20,000 households in response to immediate humanitarian needs throughout Mardan District. The voucher program enables displaced families to purchase exactly what they need at local markets, putting money back into the local economy and providing much needed assistance to struggling families. The USAID-funded voucher program will benefit more than 90,000 displaced Pakistanis residing in host communities and schools, as well as approximately 5,000 host families now struggling to provide not only for themselves, but also for displaced families.

Addressing Concerns within Camps

United Nations agencies report significant needs among the 235,000 to 245,000 individuals currently residing in internally displaced person camps, although they represent a smaller percentage of the displaced population. According to the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO), many of the camps are overcrowded, with poor sanitation and hygiene conditions, contaminated water supplies, and inadequate provision of healthcare. Further exacerbating the situation, humanitarian agencies have expressed concern regarding increases in water-borne diseases and flooding in the camps during the imminent July monsoon season, which is typically associated with seasonal increases in diarrheal diseases. Humanitarian agencies note particular concerns in displaced person camps, where cramped and unsanitary living conditions have heightened the risk of disease outbreaks and the population has low vaccination coverage and poor nutrition status, according to WHO.

In response to significant humanitarian needs for populations living in internally displaced person camps, USAID implementing partner WHO is working closely with federal, provincial, and district authorities to coordinate and deliver health services and prepare for potential disease outbreaks. WHO and health partners are investigating all water-borne disease cases, collecting samples for analysis, and establishing diarrhea treatment centers in camps. On June 11, WHO and the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) started a measles vaccination campaign for two new internally displaced person camps in NWFP, targeting an estimated 7,000 children between six and 13 years of age.

In preparation for the upcoming monsoon season, USAID implementing partners are conducting water, sanitation, and hygiene interventions in internally displaced person camps and host communities, including programs designed to prevent and reduce the spread of water-borne diseases. Because the provision of effective health care relies on the provision of adequate safe drinking water, USAID/OFDA implementing partners are supporting emergency rehabilitation of water systems, conducting public health awareness training, distributing hygiene kits in camps, schools, and other buildings where displaced populations are living, and working to improve access to essential primary healthcare with an emphasis on maternal child health.

Local and Regional Food Procurement

USAID/OFDA, through an implementing partner, the U.N. World Food Program (WFP), is supporting local purchase of food to address the acute food needs of conflict-affected internally displaced persons in Pakistan. The local and regional food procurement (LRP) program has been effective in meeting acute emergency food needs, such as those currently observed in Pakistan. Because the LRP program allows for procurement of food within the country or region where the food is distributed, food requires less time to reach beneficiaries. The Pakistan LRP program will focus on procuring basic food commodities that are staples within the Pakistani diet-wheat and pulses. The LRP program's ability to deliver timely and appropriate food commodities to displaced populations in Pakistan makes it an effective food aid mechanism to meet emergency needs.

Protection

Vulnerable populations-including women, children, and widows, as well as elderly, disabled, and displaced populations-often bear a heavy toll in complex emergencies, having lost family and community support structures and occupying low economic and social positions. In many instances, these groups are overlooked by traditional assistance mechanisms. In insecure environments where women and children make up the majority of the displaced population, clear protection interventions with cultural considerations need to be incorporated in the relief response. USAID recognizes that material assistance alone often cannot ensure the well-being of internally displaced persons. In situations of armed conflict, principles and rules of international humanitarian law guide USAID assistance to internally displaced populations. As a matter of priority, USAID works where possible to ensure that at-risk populations receive basic protection during the immediate humanitarian response to population displacements and the longer-term transition phase. USAID seeks practical protection mechanisms that can be easily integrated into ongoing programs.

According to WHO, the displaced population in Pakistan includes an estimated 500,000 children under five years of age and approximately 64,000 pregnant women. UNHCR has developed criteria to identify vulnerable displaced populations and improve referral mechanisms and protection for individuals with special needs. On June 8, UNHCR reported that U.N. Protection Cluster members had provided assistance to more than 3,500 households headed by vulnerable individuals, such as women, children, and disabled persons, to access relief services in camps. UNHCR has also established child protection monitors to identify and arrange care for separated children in camps.

USAID-funded projects support the establishment of adequate protection measures for conflict-affected displaced populations, including programs designed to provide safe spaces for women and children, as well as strengthening the host government's commitment and capacity to protection children against abuse and exploitation.

Looking Ahead

USAID continues to monitor new displacement and ongoing needs throughout Pakistan to minimize gaps in humanitarian assistance and meet the needs of the population. Currently, meeting emergency humanitarian needs remains the priority for USAID, but we are also looking forward to assisting with recovery and reconstruction efforts in the coming months. While USAID stands ready to assist Pakistan in supporting displaced persons as they return home and rebuild their lives, USAID notes that returns should only occur under international standards and once security permits returns to be sustainable. As part of the long-term economic development strategy, the President supports passage of duty-free trade benefits under the Afghanistan and Pakistan Reconstruction Opportunity Zone legislation being considered by Congress.

Thank you.