



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

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY SECTOR UPDATE – JUNE 2010

SECTOR OVERVIEW

USAID/OFDA agricultural initiatives address the immediate humanitarian needs of affected populations and strengthen local capacity and resilience to disasters. Following a crisis, USAID/OFDA often works with farmers to rehabilitate agricultural infrastructure and facilitate economic recovery through the restoration of agricultural livelihoods. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2009, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$82 million in agriculture and food security assistance throughout 23 countries. Between October 2009 and May 2010, USAID/OFDA has provided nearly \$16 million in agriculture and food security assistance in 14 countries. In addition to livestock, fisheries, pest control, veterinary medicines, and seed system and agricultural input programs, USAID/OFDA provides technical assistance to strategically address agricultural hazard reduction needs worldwide.

REDUCING POST HARVEST SEED LOSSES AND PROMOTING CAREFUL SEED INTERVENTIONS

When responding to a disaster, USAID/OFDA strives to mitigate both immediate and future effects on the agricultural sector, as well as on populations that depend on agriculture for food security. In some countries, farmers can lose up to 50 percent of stored seeds due to pests and mold, exacerbating food security conditions. To facilitate improved post harvest food and seed storage, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$1 million in FY 2009 to support a program aimed at piloting new household level seed/grain storage units or improving and/or scaling up traditional units.

Since 2001, USAID/OFDA has collaborated with the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) to improve the efficacy and cost efficiency of seed-based responses to agricultural disasters. Most recently, USAID/OFDA supported a CIAT project that challenges relief seed intervention myths, including the assumptions that displacement results in total seed loss and that food insecurity is analogous to seed insecurity. In addition, with USAID/OFDA support, CIAT published a new training manual in August 2008 focused on assessing farmers' seed systems during or immediately following a disaster. CIAT is currently rolling out the guidebook, entitled *When Disaster Strikes – A Guide to Assessing Seed System Security*, and conducting trainings on seed system assessments around the world.

MITIGATING PESTICIDE-RELATED HEALTH RISKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

In recent decades, pesticide use in developing countries has significantly increased, contributing to improved food security and economic development. However, increased use has also led to rising health risks and environmental pollution. Although developing countries account for less than 25 percent of global pesticide consumption, more than 50 percent of pesticide-related illnesses and 72 percent of pesticide-related fatalities occur in developing countries, where the continued use of banned pesticides and the presence of several thousand tons of obsolete, unusable, and dangerous pesticides present significant health and environmental risks.

In an effort to coordinate and promote the appropriate use, handling, and management of pesticides in developing countries, USAID/OFDA continues to work with relevant national ministries to develop a pesticide stewardship network and training program. The purpose of the stewardship network is to engage governments, public interest groups, development partners, the private sector, and other stakeholders in the implementation of safe pesticide use strategies to reduce human health risks and environmental pollution.

USAID/OFDA CONTACT

Julie March, Agriculture and Food Security Technical Advisor, (202) 712-0398 or jmarch@usaid.gov
Laura Powers, Agriculture and Food Security Technical Advisor, (202) 712-1981 or lpowers@usaid.gov
Yene Belayneh, Technical Advisor and Manager for AELGA, (202) 219-0469 or ybelayneh@ofda.gov