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OFDA
Disaster
Case Reports

Thailand Floods
August-October 1978

Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
Agency for International Development
Washington, D.C. 20523

THAILAND - Floods

Date:

Date: August - October 1978 (FY 79)

Location: 36 of Thailand's 72 provinces in the northern, north-eastern, and central parts of the country

No. Dead: 96

No. Affected: 1,628,000, including approximately 400 injured and 297,000 evacuated

Damage: 402 houses destroyed; damaged: 4,579 houses, 787 schools, 85 government offices, 519 temples, 5,997 sections of road, 873 bridges, 1,454 dams; 1,424,778 hectares of cultivated land flooded; 889,941 hectares of cultivated land damaged; more than 27,000 head of livestock killed in the north-eastern provinces; total damage estimated at more than \$400 million

The Disaster

In August, September, and October 1978 heavy rains, provoked in part by successive tropical storms, caused severe flooding over large parts of northern, northeastern, and central Thailand. Major rivers overflowed, disrupting highway and rail traffic, and isolating many areas. Communications with the north were badly disrupted. Damage to crops, roads, and buildings was extensive, and almost 300,000 people were evacuated from their homes.

Action Taken by the Royal Thai Government (RTG)

Flood relief efforts were carried out largely by the provincial governments. The RTG provided \$1.14 million to flood relief centers and \$10 million for flood relief programs. The RTG also provided rice valued at \$1.2 million to feed 300,000 people for one month. Both military personnel and RTG-supplied crews worked to repair homes and buildings as well as clear and repair roads. The Ministry of Agriculture provided rice seed free of charge to farmers who had lost at least 50 percent of their crop. The RTG granted \$50 to families for relatives lost in the flooding and up to \$175 to families for the repair or replacement of houses. The Thai Red Cross provided food, medicines, and clothing valued at \$10,000 to flood victims. The Thai public contributed over \$185,000 to flood relief. To coordinate rehabilitation efforts once the initial emergency phase of the disaster had passed, the RTG created a National Post-Flood Rehabilitation Committee (NPFRC).

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Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

As a result of the floods, the U.S. Ambassador to Thailand determined that a disaster existed in Thailand on October 7, 1978. However, lack of funding at the beginning of the U.S. fiscal year resulted in a delay, and a check for \$25,000 was not presented to the Prime Minister until October 19. The funds were used for the purchase of relief supplies and to meet transportation costs.....\$25,000

U.S. A.I.D. in Thailand monitored the situation from early October, and dispatched a two-man team to carry out a preliminary field assessment. A U.S. A.I.D. flood emergency task force was organized to keep abreast of the flood situation, based on information provided by the RTG and from the U.S. consulates. The A.I.D. Director met with the newly created post-flood rehabilitation committee to convey the USG's interest in Thailand's rehabilitation efforts.

In response to a request from the Thai National Research Council, the USG provided Landsat satellite photos of the flooded areas. This satellite imagery was used in assessing the extent of flood damage.

TOTAL \$25,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies *

Church World Service (CWS) - cash contribution to the Church of Christ in Thailand of \$5,000

Food for the Hungry - 88 sacks of powdered milk

TOTAL \$5,000

Assistance Provided by the International Community *

International Organizations

European Economic Community (EEC) - cash contribution of \$39,000 administered by Caritas Belgica

Food & Agriculture Organization - 378 MT salt fish and 1,252 MT vegetable oil worth a total of \$700,000

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UNICEF - blankets (\$15,000); medicines, vaccines, water pumps, water purification chemicals (\$35,000) for a total of \$50,000

United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) - cash contribution of \$20,000 for the local purchase of building materials

World Food Program (WFP) - emergency food aid for 140,000 people for three months valued at \$353,100

Governments

Australia - 2 Hercules C-130 aircraft for flood relief

Canada - cash contribution of \$150,000 through the League of Red Cross Societies

Germany, Fed. Rep. - cash contribution of \$19,500

Norway - 870 MT rice through FAO valued at \$175,000

Sweden - 1,050 MT rice through FAO worth \$235,000

United Kingdom - cash contribution of \$19,500

Voluntary Agencies

Australia Red Cross - cash contribution of \$233

China Red Cross - cash contribution totaling \$25,000

Netherlands Red Cross - cash contribution of \$50,307

Save the Children Fund (UK) - 1,000 cartons of tinned food for infants; 30 bales of clothing

Switzerland Red Cross - \$6,135 cash contribution

Turkey Red Cross - cash contribution of \$5,348

USSR Red Cross - cash and in kind contribution valued at \$22,132

TOTAL \$1,870,255

* 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.