



DISASTER  
RELIEF

CASE REPORT  
Peru-Earthquake  
October 3, 1974

Agency for International Development  
Washington, DC 20523



*The main tremor lasting 135 seconds destroyed 8,144 houses, especially those built with adobe blocks and "quincha."*

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## PERU

### Earthquake—October 3, 1974

A major earthquake caused more than \$10 million in property damage on October 3, 1974. The earthquake occurred in the Pacific Ocean approximately 50 kilometers south of Lima affecting an area of 60,000 square kilometers. The intensity registered 7.5 on the Richter scale. Seventy-eight people were killed and 2,414 injured. Casualties would probably have been much higher had children been in the many schools that were destroyed—fortunately they were closed due to vacation time.

**Value of Assistance Provided by the U.S. Government** ..... \$ 14,500  
**Value of U.S. Voluntary Agency Assistance** ..... 100,000

According to Government of Peru (GOP) sources, the main tremor was one of the longest in the nation's history, lasting 135 seconds. The movement of the earth in Lima was sufficient to destroy or cause damage to many older houses, especially those built with adobe blocks and "quincha" (a type of construction utilizing straw and clay). Throughout the disaster area, a total of 8,144 houses were destroyed and many other buildings were structurally damaged or destroyed. Among those, 140 school buildings were destroyed, 475 severely damaged, and 275 sufficiently damaged to make them unsafe for occupancy.

Some modern concrete structures were damaged such as a grain silo in Callao and buildings of the national Agrarian University at La Molina. The U.S. Information Service Binational Center sustained considerable interior damage but was considered structurally sound.

Outside the greater Lima area, the most severely affected municipalities were Callao, west of Lima; Chilca, Mala, Cerro Azul, San Vicente de Canete, Lunahuna, and Chincha, all south of Lima; and Puente Piedra, north of the capital city.

#### **ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF PERU**

Because of the considerable loss of houses, 41,260 persons were left homeless. Of this number, 3,700 were fed by a mass feeding program organized by the Peruvian Civil Defense (PCD), utilizing food donated from

various sources. PCD was active in distributing tents, tarpaulins, blankets, medicines, and tools to the affected populace.

The GOP did not officially request international assistance, but PCD authorities made an informal request to the Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) for help in purchasing additional relief supplies.



A.I.D. financed "esteras" (woven cane mats) are loaded on trucks to be taken to areas and used in building shelters for the homeless.



*The earthquake caused more than \$10 million in property losses throughout the affected area.*

#### **ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT**

A.I.D. Mission Director Donald R. Finberg and Mission Disaster Relief Officer Jacob Willbeek-Le Mair visited the affected area on October 6, in the company of the United Nations Development Program Resident Representative. They confirmed that official Peruvian reports as to the extent of the physical damage and destruction were essentially correct. Based on the observations made by Messrs. Finberg and Le Mair, U.S. Ambassador Robert W. Dean determined the disaster was of the magnitude to warrant U.S. Government assistance. On October 8, he exercised his disaster relief authority releasing \$12,500 from A.I.D. contingency funds to locally purchase emergency relief supplies which the PCD distributed to the homeless victims.

Taking into consideration that the weather was very warm with practically no rainfall, A.I.D. and PCD officials decided not to invest in expensive tents but to purchase esteras (woven cane mats) for emergency shelter, e.g. for the cost of one tent, at

least ten estera shelters could be erected. Purchasing the esteras was difficult as they had to be obtained from many small manufacturers located along the entire coast of Peru. This task was accomplished by the Peruvian Government agency Pesca-Peru. The esteras were delivered and stored in warehouses in Lima until distributed by the PCD along with 1,000 blankets purchased by A.I.D.

Ten metric tons of PL 480, Title II Food for Peace commodities (valued at \$2,000) were distributed through U.S. voluntary agencies having ongoing programs in Peru.

Total U.S. Government assistance was  
\$14,500

#### **ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES**

Seventh-Day Adventist World Service (SAWS) shipped to Peru 50 tons of clothing valued at \$100,000, and SAWS personnel built 1,000 shelters and distributed eight tons of PL 480 food commodities, mostly in the Lima area.

**ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

A League of Red Cross Societies (LICROSS) delegate relief expert from Geneva arrived in Lima on October 5. He was joined by the League's Regional Delegate in Latin America to assist the Peruvian Red Cross with their relief operation. LICROSS issued an appeal to member National Societies for aid to the earthquake victims. Cash and gifts in kind were contributed by the following Societies:

Belgium	\$ 18,621
Canada	16,834
Chile	595
Denmark	2,002
France	3,916

Germany (Democratic Republic of)	74,673
Great Britain	17,920
Ireland	1,792
Japan	3,584
Lebanon	209
Luxembourg	418
Monaco	1,170
Netherlands	14,588
New Zealand	46
Philippines	274
Poland	12,038
South Africa	346
Spain	3,846
Sweden	26,391
Turkey	800
U.S.S.R.	154,553
Yugoslavia	3,968
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$358,584</b>



*One thousand blankets furnished by A.I.D. and other relief supplies were distributed by the Peruvian Civil Defense.*

