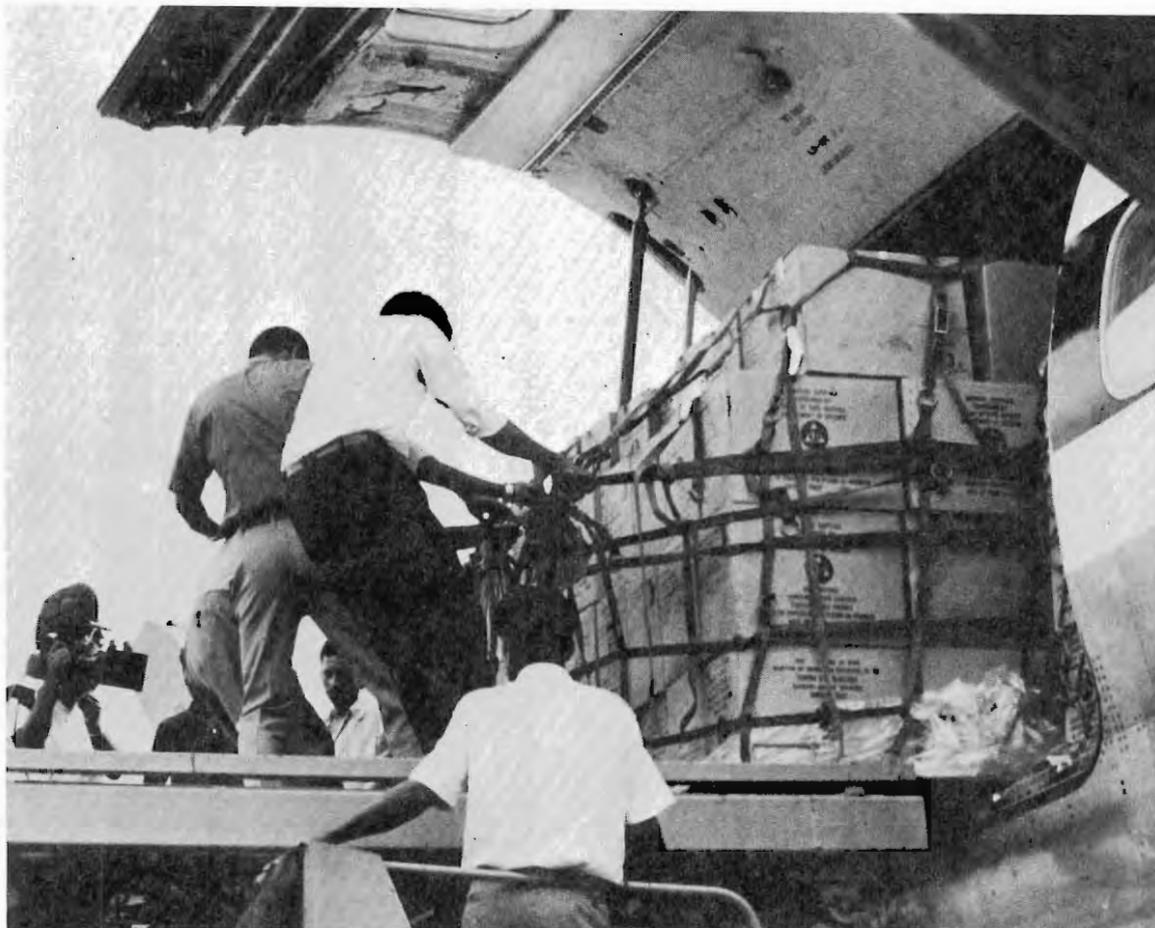




DISASTER
RELIEF

CASE REPORT
Bangladesh—Floods
July–October 1974

Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523



An emergency shipment of Civil Defense survival biscuits arrived in Dacca on August 20, 1974. The U.S. Government provided 4,867 tons of biscuits valued at more than \$10 million.

Foreign Disaster Case Reports are publications of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, Agency for International Development. This office has responsibility for coordinating U.S. Government foreign disaster relief responses and for the further coordination of such activities with those of the U.S. private and international disaster relief communities.

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BANGLADESH—FLOODS

July-October 1974

Seasonal monsoon flooding of unusual proportions in the summer and fall of 1974 extended over 35,000 square miles of Bangladesh, affecting 11 of the 19 districts and bringing severe hardship and losses to 36 million people and the fledgling Bangladesh Government. The Bangladesh Government estimated casualties and losses as follows:

Deaths—from flooding . . .	1,200
Deaths—from disease and starvation	27,500
People affected	36,000,000
Houses destroyed or severely damaged (including temporary shelters)	425,000
Houses partially damaged (including temporary shelters)	868,000
Education institutions affected	16,200
Submerged roads (miles) . .	800
Considerable damage to river embankments	
Crop losses:	
Acres of rice	3,600,000
Tons of stored rice	1,100,000
Acres of jute	172,000
Bales of stored jute	238,000
Acres of miscellaneous crops	184,000
Tons of fertilizer	25,000
Dollar damage:	
Agriculture	\$325,900,000
Roads and embankments	75,900,000
Schools	19,600,000
Housing	157,800,000
	<u>\$579,200,000</u>

The Bangladesh Government appealed for outside assistance. Fifty-two nations, the European Economic Community, major vol-

untary agencies, and the United Nations responded to the appeal, providing both emergency and longer-term relief.

	New Grants	PL 480 Title I Food	Loans
<i>(in millions of dollars)</i>			
<i>Value of Assistance</i>			
U.S. Government	\$ 14.0*	\$35.0	\$
U.S. Voluntary Agencies	2.3		
International Community	128.6		5.9
	<u>\$144.9</u>	<u>\$35.0</u>	<u>\$5.9</u>

* Includes contingency fund expenditures of \$2,897,000. Additionally, approximately \$12 million was provided from funds allotted for previous disasters in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is subject to sheet flooding every year; it is normal and expected, but occasionally the flooding is of such magnitude that a major disaster results. Such was the case in the summer and fall of 1974 when flooding extended over nearly one-half of the country affecting parts of the delta so severely that some people described it as the worst flood disaster in their memory. In 1970 a serious but lesser flood occurred, and in that same year a cyclone and tidal bore killed 300,000 and left millions homeless. Civil strife in 1971 culminated in a war between India and Pakistan which resulted in the displacement of 27 million East Pakistanis. East Pakistan emerged as the independent nation of Bangladesh in December 1971. Weak, disorganized, lacking resources, and already dependent on annual imports of three million tons of grain, it was ill prepared to cope with another major disaster.

The unusually heavy monsoon rains of 1974 commenced somewhat early (early July), causing the three huge rivers that converge in Bangladesh—the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, and the Meghna—and innumerable tributaries to spill over their banks. The flooding continued throughout August, forcing millions of people from their houses and

land, disrupting communications, uprooting rice seedlings and other crops, and destroying stored grain, crop seeds, and jute. Eleven of Bangladesh's 19 districts were affected—Sylhet, Mymensingh, and Comilla the most seriously. Outside Dacca, the water quickly reached the roofs of houses—100,000 victims had to be evacuated, and thousands more, together with their domestic animals, sought shelter on roofs, in small boats, and on floating garbage platforms. The waters began to recede gradually in September, but as late as mid-October certain regions were still inundated—Mymensingh continued to appear as an enormous lake stretching as far as the eye could see.

Because of the pre-flood shortage of grain and the extensive damage to standing and stored crops from the floods, famine threatened large areas of the country and health deterioration set in. Although cholera is endemic in Bangladesh the floods brought on an outbreak which reached epidemic proportions in September. Deaths from the floods numbered approximately 1,200, but it was reported that 27,500 people died of starvation and disease.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT

On July 29, the Bangladesh Government (BDG) appealed to the United Nations, other international organizations, and potential donor countries for assistance. There was enough stored food in the country to meet the immediate requirements for most areas, but the BDG indicated that substantial quantities of grain would be needed to feed the flood victims over the next two to six months. Other urgent needs were house-building materials, medicines, and cloth.

On August 2, the Prime Minister placed the Army and Air Force on alert, and instructed the units to assist in relief operations, airdrop supplies, restore disrupted communications, and insure the rail transportation of food grains and relief supplies.

The Bangladesh Red Cross Society launched

an effective relief action for the most severely affected victims, providing them with blankets, tents, clothing, water purification tablets, medicaments, milk, and food, using its own resources at first and then depending on the cash and material aid sent to Bangladesh by other national Red Cross Societies in response to a League of Red Cross Societies appeal. Therapeutical feeding was undertaken for some of the severely malnourished victims, mostly children, including drop-feeding in order to enable them to return to a normal diet.

The BDG and the Red Cross established over 100 relief centers and gruel kitchens. At one time, approximately two million people were sheltered in these centers. With the large quantities of grain donated by other countries, the BDG was able to prevent massive starvation, and it launched a drive to plant vegetables and rice for the next crop, requesting donations of seeds from potential donor nations.

A relief organization known as the Christian Organization for Relief and Reconstruction (CORR), based on the four Catholic dioceses of the country, has been operating in Bangladesh since the 1970 cyclone. It immediately released food and supplies from its warehouses and drew up a plan to deal with the post-flood period. It helped victims replant lost rice crops and encouraged them to intensify the winter crops program by supplying seed. Another organization, the National Council of Churches of Bangladesh, provided assistance for 12 projects organized under the emergency food assistance program by the Economic and Social Work Committee. The program was designed to provide food aid to supplement the nutritional needs of children, pregnant and lactating mothers, and the aged. Wherever possible food-for-work projects were used as vehicles for distribution. These projects included road building and repairs, school feeding, irrigation, and water storage facilities. Both of these organizations receive their main support from church-related and relief organizations of other countries.



Floodwater began to recede gradually in September, but as late as mid-October certain regions were still inundated.

The monetary value of assistance by the Bangladesh Government and in-country relief organizations was not available.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

On July 29 the Bangladesh Government appealed for world assistance. Ambassador Boster responded by declaring a disaster, and on August 2 made a cash donation of \$25,000 to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. At this time the total requirements were not known. Therefore, U.S. Mission staff were instructed to survey damages and report the needs. The Mission reported that crop destruction had been significant, public health was deteriorating, transportation was disrupted, and the economy affected severely.

On August 16, the Mission recommended that the U.S. Government send tents, blankets, seeds, and survival biscuits, and indicated that other urgent requirements were

building materials, cloth, and medicines. On August 19, the Mission recommended that A.I.D. contribute plastic sheeting and substantial quantities of food grains.

Coordinating with other donor countries and international organizations, an airlift of 596 tents, 14,946 blankets, and 200 rolls of polyethylene from the disaster stockpile at Guam was completed on August 19. AID/FDRC was informed by the U.S. Defense Civil Preparedness Agency that it would be possible to assemble several thousand tons of survival biscuits from localities in the United States. This type of biscuit had been used for disasters in Bangladesh and proved to be an excellent emergency food supplement, easily distributed and requiring no preparation. An initial shipment of 133,000 pounds was sent by air to Dacca on August 20 and 21. To meet a late fall deadline when food shortages were expected to be most acute, arrangements were made to ship

4,800 tons on several ships directly to the harbor of Chittagong. Most of the biscuits arrived there late in November or early December. During the month of December a U.S. military airlift was organized to transfer the biscuits from Chittagong into the food-deficit areas of Bangladesh.

A PL 480 food grant was made through the World Food Program for 3,000 metric tons of wheat and 200 metric tons of vegetable oil. In addition, because of the flood and its aftermath, arrangements were made for the acceleration of the FY 1975 concessional sales agreement for food grains under PL 480 Title I. The first agreement under the FY 1975 program for 100,000 metric tons of wheat and 50,000 metric tons of rice was concluded on October 4, 1974. Subsequent amendments to it added more food grains.

A.I.D. also purchased and shipped ten tons of vegetable seed for immediate planting. The seed shipment arrived in Dacca on September 18.

On September 13, the Cholera Research Laboratory reported a heavy outbreak of cholera and asked that the U.S. provide three 32-man hospital tents and 200 cots. An airlift of these items arrived on October 3.

Further, A.I.D. authorized the expenditure of \$12 million for the purchase of local building materials from funds allotted previously to Bangladesh for recovery following earlier disasters.

SUMMARY OF USG ASSISTANCE

Contingency Fund Expenditures

Cash donation	\$	25,000
10 tons of vegetable seeds and airlift		88,000
596 tents, 14,946 blankets		186,000
200 rolls of polyethylene		25,000
3 32-man hospital tents, 200 cots		28,000
U.S. military airlift to Bangladesh		500,000

U.S. military airlift within Bangladesh	303,000
Ocean transport of Defense Civil Preparedness Agency Biscuits	1,800,000
Payment of air transport for supplies donated by CRS, CWS and MAP	19,000
TDY of A.I.D. personnel and miscellaneous costs	13,000
	<u>\$ 2,987,000</u>

PL 480 Title II Food Grants

3,000 metric tons of wheat and 200 of vegetable oil and ocean freight	967,000
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Non-reimbursed Assistance from Other USG Federal Agency (DCPA)

Value of 4,867 tons of Civil Defense survival biscuits ...	10,000,000
Total New Grant Assistance ..	<u>\$13,954,000</u>

PL 480 Title I

Concessional Sales

100,000 metric tons of wheat and 50,000 metric tons of rice	\$35,000,000
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From Funds Allotted for Previous Disasters

Cash grants for building materials	\$12,000,000
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U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES:

Many U.S. voluntary agencies have been involved in rehabilitation projects in Bangladesh since the 1971 civil strife, and the U.S. Mission reported they diverted to the flood relief effort supplies and equipment brought in for these projects. The kind, quantity, and value of this in-country assistance were not reported to FDRC. Voluntary agencies have advised FDRC of the following additional flood contributions:

American National Red Cross— Cash	\$	10,000
Baptist World Alliance—Cash .		17,220
CARE—Cooperated with the Lions Club in Bangladesh to feed 2,000 refugees daily. Cash contribution		3,000

Catholic Relief Services— Cooperated with the Christian Organization for Relief and Reconstruction in Bangladesh. Details of assistance were not available except that Medical supplies shipped from the U.S. were valued at	11,000
Church World Service— Made cash contributions through the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches of Bangladesh totaling \$125,000 and sent vaccines costing \$3,290	128,290
Christian Reformed World Relief Committee—food supplies	20,000
Medical Assistance Programs— 20,734 lbs. medicines	1,014,411
Medical Mission Sisters— supplies, services, cash	29,701
The Salvation Army—relief team and cash donation	1,000
Seventh Day Adventist Welfare Service—cash (\$23,000); clothing (\$31,250); Medicines (\$5,560); Boat (\$5,000)	68,810
Sisters of the Holy Cross— Cash	36,847
United Church Board for World Ministries—Cash	12,000
The United Methodist Church— Cash, 1,000 MT wheat	350,000
World Relief Commission— Cash (\$10,000); 25 tons of clothing (\$50,000)	60,000
World Vision Relief Organization—Cash	557,535
Total	\$ 2,319,814

**ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY
THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY:**

The United Nations Disaster Relief Office and the League of Red Cross Societies through their appeals were instrumental in marshalling massive worldwide contribu-

tions to the flood relief efforts for Bangladesh. Bilateral aid was also forthcoming by many donor governments. A summary of this assistance follows:

<i>Intergovernment and International Organizations</i>	
European Economic Community— 115,000 tons wheat (\$23,000,000); 9,450 tons of milk powder (\$8,500,000); 6,500 tons of butter oil (\$10,400,000)	\$41,900,000
Lutheran World Federation— Airlift of approximately 40 tons of relief supplies including 12 tons of milk powder, 5 tons curate blankets, tents and medicaments *	
World Council of Churches— Cash donation to Bangladesh National Christian Council (\$10,000); Cash to UNDRO for cholera vaccines (\$10,000); Food for Work Projects (\$500,000); Clothing (\$130,000); Housing (\$10,000); Medicines (\$50,000); Agricultural Projects (\$1,700,000); 300 metric tons insecticides and pesticides (\$448,000); airlift of approximately 61 tons of relief supplies including 23 tons milk powder, 10 tons curate and KM2, baby food, tents, clothing and medicaments	\$2,858,000*
United Nations: World Food Program Distributed 3,000 tons of wheat and 200 tons of vegetable oil donated by and credited under U.S. Government. Financed road construction projects costing	\$ 1,572,000
UNICEF—emergency allocation for relief supplies	513,000
UN Development Program— allocation for vegetable seeds	80,501

Fund—allocation to the World Food Program for transport costs of 115,000 tons EEC wheat (\$7,350,000); purchase of 11,500 metric tons of rice (\$4,945,999)	12,295,000	contribution; 22,000 tons of wheat from the United Arab Emirates contribution of \$5,000,000; wheat and medicines with the Netherlands contribution of \$747,728; and emergency medicaments with the World Council of Churches contribution of \$10,000).	
UN Disaster Relief Office—allocation from regular budget for WHO procurement of emergency medical supplies (UNDRO also purchased and transported through WFP: 48,000 tons of wheat from a \$10 million Saudi Arabia	15,000	Total for the United Nations . .	<u>\$14,475,501</u>
		Total from International and Intergovernmental Organizations	\$59,233,501

Donor Governments, Red Cross Societies, Private Groups and Individuals

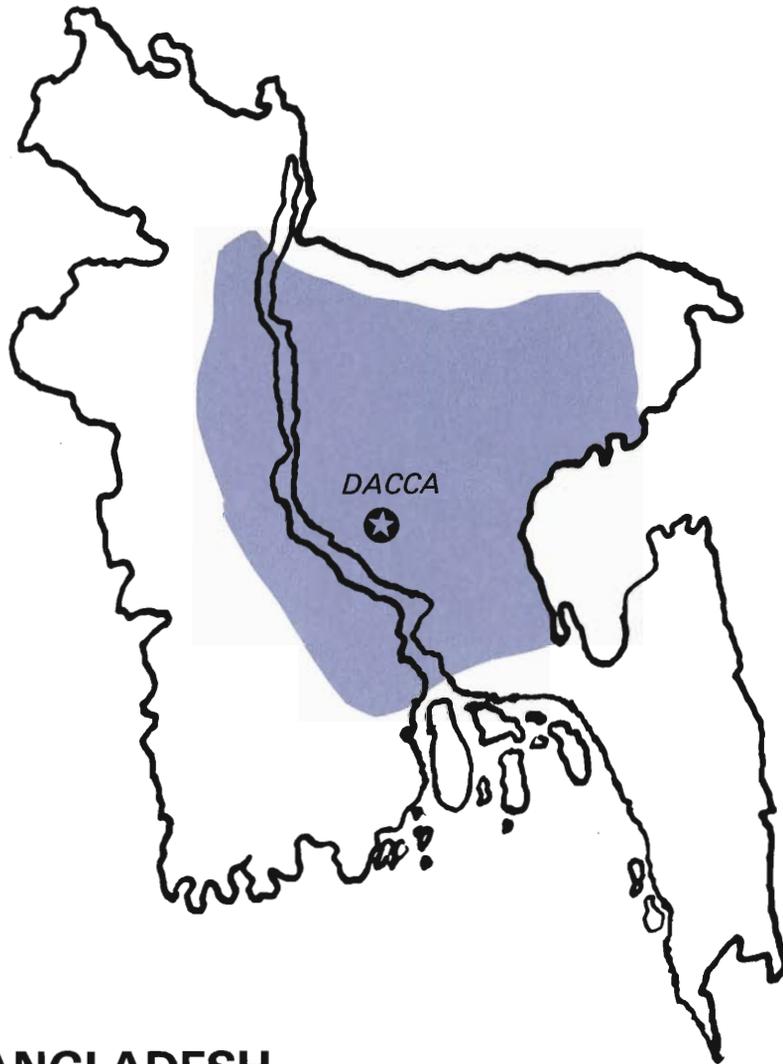
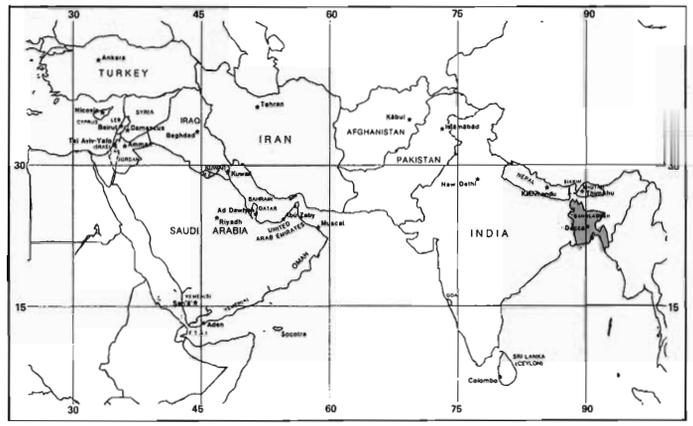
	<i>Governments</i>	<i>Red Cross Societies</i>	<i>Voluntary Agencies</i>	<i>Total</i>
Afghanistan—Cash		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000
Australia				
Planeload of relief supplies	\$ 200,803			
77,000 tons wheat and transport	17,402,945			
Cash		4,328	\$ 7,335	
1,230 yds cotton cloth		3,452		
68 tons foodstuffs		26,588		
Other Supplies		217		17,645,668
Bahrain—Cash		1,000		1,000
Belgium—Cash		26,288		26,288
Canada—Cash Grants	67,010	41,693		
16 cartons clothing		6,410		
Services of League Delegate		5,892		
Vegetable seeds			20,000	
150,000 doses cholera vaccine			*	141,005*
China—5,000 tons wheat, 40,000 cotton blankets and knitwear		1,020,408		1,020,408
Czechoslovakia—12 tons dried milk and 77 tents	46,710			46,710
Denmark				
Cash Grants		269,866		
200,000 capsules tetracycline and clothing		23,256		
Services of Delegates		*		
Medicines and vaccines			48,234	341,365
Egypt—3.5 tons foods and 1,113 kg of medicines		15,833		15,833

Finland—Cash Grants	54,054	3,356	57,410
France			
Cash Grants		47,789	
25,000 Tons Wheat (value est. by FDRC)	4,000,000		
27.4 tons foodstuffs		36,051	4,083,840
Germany, Democratic Republic			
5 tons milk powder, 9098 meters cloth, 1.5 tons water purification products, clothing and medicaments		145,334	145,334
Germany, Federal Republic			
Cash Grants	31,496	15,094	
30,000 tons wheat and transport ...		5,905,512	
5,000 woolen blankets, 10 tons of clothing and 50 tons of rice		42,675	
Relief supplies	7,874		124,528
Concessional loan (\$5,905,512)			6,127,179
Holy See—Cash	10,000		10,000
Iceland—Cash Grants	2,108	841	2,949
India—Petroleum products	700,000		
708 tents, clothing, anti-snakebite serum, water purification tablets, tinned baby food	90,322		
18 tons baby food, 100 tents, 35,000 pcs clothing, 300,000 water purification tablets		77,419	
Services of Delegate		*	867,741
Indonesia—Services of Delegate		*	*
Iraq—Cash	3,000,000		3,000,000
Iran—Cash		217,500	217,500
Ireland			
Government—Cash	58,139	22,612	
8 tons milk powder, 29 cartons baby food, 3 cartons clothing		7,953	88,704
Italy—Cash		1,412	1,412
Japan—Cash		7,800	
288,072 can milk powder, 60,000 blankets, 60,000 sets underwear, 240,000 yards cotton, vitamins and medicines	666,667		
Services of Delegates		*	674,467
Khmer Republic—Cash		22	22
Korea Republic—Cash		500	500

	<i>Governments</i>	<i>Red Cross Societies</i>	<i>Voluntary Agencies</i>	<i>Total</i>
Kuwait—Cash		6,000		6,000
Lebanon—Cash		168		168
Liechtenstein—Cash		1,000		1,000
Luxembourg—Cash	23,000	671		23,671
Malaysia				
Cash	30,992	273		
Food	10,330			
Anti-cholera vaccine	*			
Services of Delegate		*		41,595
Mauritania—Cash		1,185		1,185
Monaco—Cash		526		526
Netherlands—Cash	1,488,468	282,023		
3,000 tons wheat (value estimated by FDRC)	480,000			
13,000 blankets, 625 disaster kits, 42.9 tons foodstuffs, 468,000 multivitamins		255,829		
576,4 tons emergency biscuits		428,901		2,935,221
New Zealand—Cash		8,789	14,493	
Airlift food and medical supplies ...	362,319			
Milk powder			9,420	395,021
Norway—Cash	333,333	544,830		
Baby Food	41,483			
Services of Delegates		*		
Airlift 15 tons relief supplies			*	919,646
Pakistan				
6,000 tons rice	2,500,000			
1,000 tons cotton yarn	1,500,000			
Ocean freight	250,000			4,250,000
Philippines—Cash		500		
Services of Delegate		*		500
Poland—1,092 blankets		7,650		7,650
Qatar—Cash	1,500,000			1,500,000
Romania—55 tons relief supplies consisting of tinned food, milk powder, flour rice, sugar and cloth .		41,725		41,725
Saudia Arabia—Cash	10,000,000			10,000,000
South Africa—Cash		290		290
Spain—Cash		3,448		3,448
Sri Lanka—Services of Delegates		*		*

Sweden—Cash	900,000	252,523	
9,000 tons wheat and transport	2,500,000		
25 tons milk powder, 82 tons of vegetable oil, 6 tons clothing, 400,000 water purification tablets .		155,080	
Services of Delegate		7,672	3,815,275
Switzerland			
Airlift 100 tents, 64 tons milk powder, 5 million water purifi- cation tablets, 6,700 cotton blankets, clothing	266,323		
200 tons wheat/soy mix			130,114
4 million Maxaform tablets			120,000
Clothing		4,772	521,209
Thailand			
200 tons rice (value estimated by FDRC)	32,000		
200,000 doses anti-cholera vaccine .		1,849	
Medicaments		248	34,097
United Arab Emirates	5,000,000		5,000,000
United Kingdom—Cash	11,905	11,905	
Airlift UNDRO/UNICEF/WHO supplies	44,048		
T.A.B. vaccine and anti-cholera culture	23,810		
30,000 tons wheat (value estimated by FDRC)	4,800,000		
2 tons milk powder, disinfectant and medicines		5,710	
Air shipments of 150,000 doses anti-cholera vaccine			10,714
Dispatch of three flood relief teams and unspecified quantities food, soap and other relief supplies ...			* 4,908,092
Vietnam Republic—Cash	1,000		1,000
Yugoslavia			
25 tons milk powder, 20 tons sugar, 50 tons edible oil, 4,440 meters cloth, 1,700 blankets	129,032		
2.4 tons milk powder		5,767	134,799
U.S.S.R.—anti-cholera vaccine and medicines		164,583	164,583
Private Individuals—Cash			201,123
Total Assistance Other Nations			\$ 69,428,159
Total Assistance International Community			\$128,661,660

* Incomplete or not reported



BANGLADESH