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DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE BRIEF



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Purpose

- To discuss the role and capabilities of OFDA before, during and after an emergency or disaster situations
- To provide the Emergency Action Committee (EAC) with guidelines for the conduct of disaster operations and the the provision of USG relief assistance



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Disaster

A natural or human-caused event which causes intense negative impacts on people, goods, services and/or the environment, **exceeding the affected community's capability to respond.**





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Role of the U.S. Mission in a Disaster

- Protection of the lives of U.S. Citizens
- Report on health and welfare of U.S. Citizens
- Determine whether USG response assistance is needed/warranted
- Coordinate USG response efforts



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OFDA

The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) is the office within the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) responsible for providing humanitarian assistance in response to disasters and crises outside of the U.S. and its territories.

OFDA is part of USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance.



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OFDA's Authority

Legislative:

Foreign Assistance Act -- Chapter 9, Sections 491 & 492

Executive:

President named USAID Administrator 'Special Coordinator for International Disaster Response'

USAID Administrator delegates responsibility for disaster relief to OFDA



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OFDA's Special Capabilities

- Notwithstanding Authority
- “Borrowing” Authority
- Response Network
 - Other Federal Agencies (DOD, CDC, USFS, USPHS, USGS)
 - Search & Rescue Groups (Fairfax County, VA and Los Angeles County Fire & Rescue services)



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OFDA's Resources for Disaster Response

- \$50,000 to the U.S. Embassy or USAID
- Assessment teams
- Relief commodities
- DARTs
- Hurricane Pre-deployment teams
- Technical Specialists
- Regional Advisors
- Funding for proposals from NGOs, IOs, or UN agencies for relief and rehabilitation



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OFDA Stockpile Commodities

When approved by OFDA, requests must be sent by IMMEDIATE CABLE to OFDA/W and should include:

- A complete description of each item requested
- Specific quantity of each type of commodity requested
- Name of a local consignee (local gov't office, NGO)
- Outline of consignees, distribution capabilities and plans





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WHAT IS A DART?

Disaster Assistance Response Team

A rapid response management team made up of disaster relief specialists who:

- Conduct assessments, identify and prioritize needs
- Manage onsite relief activities
- Report on situation
- Recommend response actions
- Coordinate with affected country and other response organizations

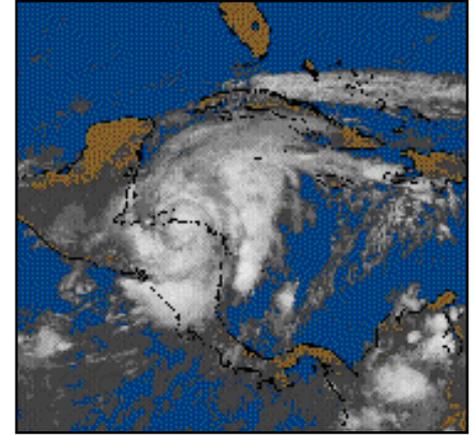




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Hurricane Pre-deployment Teams

In the event of an impending hurricane, OFDA may pre-deploy fully equipped teams to countries after consultation with the U.S. Mission.

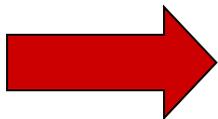




Disaster Alert

Upon receipt of information concerning a disaster or an impending disaster, the Mission Disaster Relief Officer (MDRO) will, depending on the circumstances, report:

- that a disaster situation exist and that efforts are underway to verify the impacts -- or
- that an emergency has occurred/is occurring and an incipient disaster situation exists



Convene EAC and send Disaster Alert Cable to OFDA/Washington



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Disaster Declaration

Pre-requisites:

- The disaster is beyond the ability of the affected country to respond effectively
- The disaster is of sufficient magnitude to warrant USG intervention, and it is in the interest of the USG to provide assistance
- USG assistance has been requested or the affected country is willing to accept U.S. disaster relief assistance
- **Once these criteria are met, the Chief of Mission may declare that a disaster exists.**



Disaster Assistance Authority

- The authority allowing the COM to declare a disaster is known as the COM Disaster Assistance Authority (DAA).
- When the DAA is exercised, the COM can request up to US\$50,000 in cash, supplies or services from OFDA.



Foreign Disaster Assistance in Excess of DAA US\$50,000

- If the magnitude of the disaster requires assistance in excess of the \$50,000 DAA, such assistance can be provided through OFDA;
- Prior to committing any additional disaster assistance, the Mission must submit a specific request and justification to OFDA for approval;
- It is suggested that this be first discussed with OFDA by e-mail, phone, or fax before sending a formal request.



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Department of Defense

- US military assistance for assessment and relief activities that is not OFDA-funded has separate authority;
- Any OFDA funding for DOD assistance must be approved by OFDA in advance;
- This assistance should be coordinated through the MILGRP and OFDA.





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Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

- OFDA encourages favorable consideration of the use of NGOs in disaster relief and recovery efforts;
- Both US-based and local NGOs often have access to resources such as:
 - food stock
 - transportation
 - local staff in disaster-affected region
 - communication links
 - tools and other useful commodities



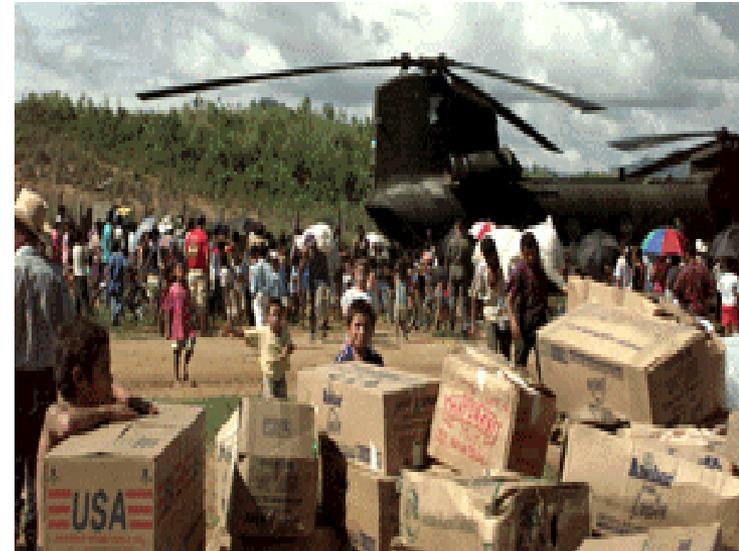
Role of NGOs in Disaster Response

- NGOs provide a variety of essential support services to affected populations, including:
 - Distribution of food & non-food relief supplies
 - Primary and emergency health care
 - Water and sanitation
 - Shelter/housing
 - Camp management and refugee protection
 - Logistics and warehousing



Unsolicited Offers

- MDRO should screen all offers to ensure that:
 - they are appropriate for the victims needs and culture;
 - they will not require costly transportation;
- Inappropriate clothing, food and out-of-date medical supplies are common unsolicited items that should be discouraged.





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