

Summary  
Reports ...

**Peru Floods I**  
**November 17, 1977**

**Peru Floods II**  
**March 22-23, 1978**



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance  
Agency for International Development

July 1979



Peru--Floods (I)Data

Date: November 17, 1977

Location: Cuzco

Dead: 4

People Affected: 500 homeless, 140 hospital patients displaced

Damage: Estimated at \$1 million including inundation of 350 houses, collapse of 7 buildings, interruption of communications, 100 hectares of white corn, and \$275,820 worth of damage to the Cuzco Regional Hospital

The Disaster

- Torrential rains and a hailstorm battered Cuzco on November 17, 1977. The rain was most intense from 4:00 pm to 6:30 pm but continued until dawn.
- Most of the streets were blocked by mud and stones.
- One of the most seriously affected facilities was the Cuzco Regional Hospital. Floods inundated the basement and the first floor where medicines were stored and where the installations for electricity, laundry, and cooking were located. Large quantities of food, bed linens, medicines, and equipment were damaged or destroyed. Twelve cars in the parking lot were buried with mud and water. The hospital was forced to suspend all services.

Action Taken by the Government of Peru (GOP) and by Peruvian Groups

- Of the 140 persons hospitalized at the time of the flood, 80 had to be evacuated immediately to the nearest hospital. The rest, even though they still needed medical care, were discharged.
- Approximately 500 volunteers helped remove water from the hospital. Students from the local university, troops from the Army, members of Civil Defense, staffers of the Banco de la Nacion, and Electro Peru assisted. Some commercial firms sent food to feed both the victims and the volunteer relief workers.
- The Ministry of Health sent one planeload of emergency equipment, medicines, and technical personnel.
- The GOP removed water from the hospital in order to repair damaged equipment, repaired the electrical system and the elevator machinery, provided a temporary water supply using borrowed equipment, repaired sterilization equipment, and installed two electric pumps in the water system.

Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

- On January 13, 1978, in response to an official request from the GOP Ministry of Health, the U. S. Ambassador to Peru, Harry W. Shlaudeman determined that a disaster of such a magnitude as to warrant USG assistance had occurred in Peru. The USG was asked to help rehabilitate the Cuzco Regional Hospital.
- Two refrigerator chambers, medicines, and other equipment and materials for the nutrition service of the hospital were replaced with \$10,000 from the USG.

TOTAL - \$10,000

Assistance Provided by U. S. Voluntary Agencies

- None

Assistance Provided by the International Community

- Japan -- details not reported
- Pan American Health Organization - services of a staff member to help rehabilitate the Cuzco Regional Hospital
- United Nations Development Program and Office of the U. N. Disaster Relief Coordinator - \$37,000 worth of equipment for the Cuzco Regional Hospital

TOTAL -- \$37,000

Peru--Floods (II)Data

Date: March 22-23, 1978

Location: Central and lower Huallaga River basin, San Martin Department

Dead: 2

People Affected: 17,000 of which 5,000 homeless

Damage: \$2 million worth of damage to housing--800 houses destroyed and 1,200 houses damaged; 47 schools destroyed, 7 damaged, loss of educational facilities put at \$750,000; 16 police stations and 24 municipal buildings damaged; 2 municipal electrical systems destroyed; at least 2 bridges damaged; loss of vehicles; \$1 million in agricultural damage including 11,000 hectares corn, 12,000 hectares bananas, 2,600 hectares beans, 1,000 hectares other crops, and 1,100 hectares pasturage washed away; livestock losses including 1,700 cattle, 1,670 pigs, 7,500 chickens, 112 horses, 20 sheep

The Disaster

- Heavy rains falling in the Juanjui to Tarapoto area of Peru during the period of March 19-22, 1978 caused the Huallaga River to rise so quickly that it even backed up into its tributaries, the Mayo and Biopo Rivers.
- March 22-23, the Huallaga reached its peak, flooding 45 communities along a 200 km stretch from Jaunjui to Pelajo. In the lower Huallaga region, the flooding river was 3 km across where it is normally less than 1/2 km wide. This was the worst flooding in 40 years.
- Most people were able to escape the rising waters but were unable to take their possessions with them.
- A recent influx of settlers into the area has increased the number of settlements built close to the river.
- Most houses in the area are made with pressed earth (tapeado) walls or cane walls with mud plaster. Roofs are palm thatch or corrugated steel. When the floods waters washed away the mud, the houses fell in.

Action Taken by the Government of Peru (GOP) and Peruvian Groups

- On March 25, 1978, the Peruvian Civil Defense (PCD) inspected the disaster area by Peruvian Air Force helicopter. The next day, 4,000 kg of food, tents, and clothing were sent to San Martin. An additional 18 tons of food, tents, and medicines were flown in over the next two days. One week later, another planeload of 4,000 kg of supplies was sent.

- Subsequent PCD aid was sent by truck because of the high cost of renting Air Force transport. The Lima--Tarapoto trip took five days. During April, 92 tons of supplies were sent in this way.
- The GOP made approximately \$250,000 available to the PCD.
- Caritas donated 1,000 pairs of rubber boots and set up a milk distribution program for 5,000 children for 9 months.
- OFASA (Organisaciones de Federaciones Adventistas, Sociedad Anonima) donated 100 cases of milk and 200 sacks of beans.

TOTAL -- \$250,000

Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

- On April 13, 1978, the U. S. Ambassador to Peru, Harry W. Shlaudeman, determined that a disaster of such a magnitude as to warrant USG assistance had occurred in Peru. Two mission personnel had visited the disaster-stricken area.
- The Ambassador's \$25,000 discretionary authority was used to procure and donate to the PCD: 270 picks, 270 shovels, 5,000 sheets of galvanized roofing, 50 hammers, 125 kerosene lamps, 800 mosquito nets, 240 kg of roofing nails, and one 50-horsepower outboard motor. The building materials and mosquito nets were distributed by the PCD to local committees in the affected towns. The boat motor was loaned by the PCD to the local Ministry of Health unit.

TOTAL -- \$25,000

Assistance Provided by U. S. Voluntary Agencies

- None

Assistance Provided by the International Community

- United Nations Development Program -- \$20,000 to the PCD for tents
- The World Health Organization -- \$20,000 worth of medicines

TOTAL -- \$40,000



