



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for
International
Development

Washington D.C.
20523

NICARAGUA - Floods

Date: May 23-27, 1982 (FY 82)

Location: Pacific coast

No. Dead: 71

No. Affected: 40-50,000

Damage: Extensive damage to agricultural and transportation sectors: total damage estimated at \$356.5 million

The Disaster

On May 23, 1982, Tropical Storm Alleta hit the Pacific coastal region of Nicaragua. Four days of torrential rain and high winds led to serious flooding in the most heavily populated departments of the country, including Chinandega, Leon, and Esteli. Damage was also sustained in the capital city of Managua.

The most seriously affected sectors of the economy were transportation and agriculture. Twenty-one bridges -- including some railroad bridges -- were destroyed and 33 were damaged. In Corinto, the major port, the railway link to Managua was disrupted by the collapse of several bridges. Sections of highway connecting the capital with the western departments were washed away, as were rural access roads.

Major damage was also sustained in the agricultural sector. Losses included an estimated 4% of the annual production of corn, 25% of the banana crop, 2,000 MT of rice designated for export, and 5,000 head of cattle. Cotton and vegetable crops were also affected.

The storm extensively damaged housing on the coast and several dikes collapsed under the high waves. More than 40,000 people were made homeless by the flooding.

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Action Taken by the Government of Nicaragua (GON)

On May 25, the GON declared "disaster zones" in all sections of the country damaged by the storm and flooding and issued an appeal to the international community for assistance in the relief effort.

Three days later, the Foreign Ministry called a meeting of the diplomatic corps and made a formal request to all attending ambassadors and representatives for assistance.

The GON convened an Emergency Committee under the direction of the Ministry of Health to coordinate relief efforts throughout the country. The Committee included representatives from the Red Cross, workers' organizations, and private sector agencies. In most of the affected areas, the local militia or defense committee was put in charge of relief efforts. The Red Cross and other organizations distributed food and clothing and set up temporary shelters for the flood victims.

Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

On May 26, U.S. Ambassador Anthony C. Quainton determined that a disaster situation existed in the Pacific region of Nicaragua and immediately made \$25,000 available on the basis of his disaster assistance authority. A check for this amount was presented to the Nicaraguan Red Cross.

The Embassy immediately initiated transfer of 40 MT of P.L. 480 Title II commodities which had been stored in Nicaragua to the Red Cross for distribution. (These commodities had been originally programmed for relief efforts following the 1979 civil strife but were never distributed.) The food, which was enough to feed 10,000 people for two weeks, was distributed by May 29.

The Embassy then engaged the services of a disaster specialist to help the mission assess the extent of the damage, at a cost of \$8,000.

After the assessment, the USG decided that the best way it could assist Nicaragua was by providing food. Therefore, more P.L. 480 Title II commodities were distributed during the days and weeks following the flooding. Including the original 40 MT donated, the commodities were distributed as follows:

160 MT of various commodities to the Red Cross.....	\$100,000
30 MT of non-fat dry milk powder to CARE.....	\$15,000

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LORCS - provided \$51,546 in cash and 150 tents, value not reported.

Organization of American States - gave a cash contribution of \$37,700 to the Emergency Committee for a mobile hospital.

UNDP - provided \$30,000 in cash to the Emergency Committee.

UNDRO - gave \$30,000 in cash to the Emergency Committee and \$9,000 for the purchase of surgical equipment and medical supplies through the World Health Organization.

UNHCR - provided materials worth \$10,000 for Salvadorean refugees living in camps in the flooded region, and gave \$100,000 in cash for use in hospital reconstruction to the Emergency Committee.

UNICEF - contributed clothing and medicines, value not reported, to the Emergency Committee.

World Council of Churches (WCC) - contributed \$15,000 in cash and launched an appeal for more money. WCC subsequently contributed \$117,750 in cash to CEPAD.

WFP - provided 480 MT of wheat flour, 96 MT of dry skim milk, 96 MT of edible oil, and transportation for the commodities at a total value of \$426,400.

Governments

Argentina - provided 7,000 MT of cereals, value not reported.

Belgium - contributed \$22,988 in cash through the Belgian Red Cross.

Canada - made a cash donation of \$119,241 through LORCS.

Czechoslovakia - airlifted 13.5 MT of dry skim milk, medicines, large tents, clothes, and prefabricated houses with a total value of \$411,861.

Denmark - donated \$29,240 for the purchase of food and shelter through a Danish church, the Danish Red Cross, and the ICRC.

Ecuador - contributed one aircraft-load of food and medicines, value not reported.

France - donated 10,000 tons of wheat, value not reported.

Germany, Federal Republic of - gave \$50,000 to the Nicaraguan Red Cross.

Italy - provided medicines and 4,000 tons of rice with a total value of \$71,685.

Japan - gave \$50,000 in cash through the Nicaraguan Red Cross.

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Mexico - supplied 200 tons of corn, 25 tons of sesame seeds, 25,000 family rations, and camp hospitals; Mexican health and public works technicians assisted the Emergency Committee and conducted assessments, value not reported.

Netherlands - gave 5,000 MT of wheat valued at \$1,000,000 and \$78,125 in cash through LORCS.

Norway - donated \$83,612 in cash through Norsk Fokkehjelp and \$129,984 in cash through Norwegian church relief organizations and the Norwegian Red Cross.

Soviet Union - provided a 100-bed mobile hospital valued at \$1,000,000.

Spain - provided, with the Spanish Red Cross, a C-130 shipment of clothing and medicines, valued at \$100,000, to the Nicaraguan Red Cross.

Sweden - gave \$2,068,965 in cash to the GON and non-governmental organizations.

Switzerland - donated cash and 500,000 water purification tablets with a total value of \$25,773 through the Swiss Red Cross.

United Kingdom - made a cash contribution of \$35,587 through LORCS.

Venezuela - provided a C-130 shipment of food and medicines to the Nicaraguan Red Cross.

Voluntary Agencies

Australia Red Cross - gave \$1,029 in cash through LORCS.

Canada Red Cross - donated \$7,751 in cash through LORCS.

Caritas Neelandica - gave \$19,231 in cash.

Denmark Red Cross - provided \$5,847 in cash through LORCS.

Finland Red Cross - donated \$33,684 in cash and three tons of infants' clothing, value not reported, through LORCS.

France Red Cross - provided one ton of milk-protein tablets through LORCS, value not reported.

German Caritas - made a \$21,186 contribution.

Germany, Federal Republic of, Red Cross - donated \$50,000 in cash to the Nicaraguan Red Cross.

Hungary Red Cross - provided medicaments worth \$14,052 through LORCS.

Japan Red Cross - donated \$24,171 in cash through LORCS.

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Luxembourg Red Cross - gave \$2,471 in cash through LORCS.

Norway Red Cross - provided \$4,761 in cash through LORCS.

Pan American Foundation - provided two fully-equipped camp hospitals valued at \$400,000.

Soviet Union Labor Unions - provided 40,000 rations for children, 1,000 blankets, clothing, tents, and milk; value not reported.

Soviet Union Red Cross - contributed three tons of clothing and medicines to Nicaraguan Red Cross, value not reported.

Spain Red Cross - provided, with the Spanish government, a shipment of clothing and medicine (see listing under Governments).

Sweden Red Cross - provided 40 tons of clothing, value not reported, and \$6,504 in cash through LORCS.

Swiss Caritas - gave \$25,753 in cash.

United Kingdom Red Cross - donated \$8,620 in cash through LORCS.

TOTAL \$8,038,859

*Please note: the listings of assistance provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies and the International Community are compiled from reports submitted voluntarily to OFDA. It is not always possible to verify the accuracy of these reports, nor the dollar value of in-kind contributions. As a result, the total dollar values indicated in these sections should be taken as representative figures.