

BRAZIL - Floods

Date: June 26, 1984 (first declaration)
August 15, 1984 (second declaration)

Location: Rio Grande do Sul State
Santa Catarina State

No. Dead: 27

No. Affected: About 250,000

Damage: In both areas housing, agriculture, transportation networks, water supplies, power and telephone lines, and sanitary facilities were heavily damaged.

The Disaster

Heavy rainfall in the State of Rio Grande do Sul during June caused the worst flooding in the area since 1941. All the major rivers overflowed their banks as water levels rose an average of 5.5 meters above normal. The city of Porto Alegre and 37 other municipalities were inundated, forcing over 12,000 people to abandon their homes and seek refuge elsewhere.

Unusually heavy winter rains, which had begun in June, continued throughout July and August in southern Brazil. By mid-August, over 30,000 people in Santa Catarina were homeless and damage to roads and other infrastructure was severe.

The total damage to housing, agriculture, and transportation was estimated at over one billion dollars in the two states.

Action Taken by the Government of Brazil (GOB)

In both Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina, national civil defense and local authorities took the lead in responding to the flooding. States of emergency were declared and the GOB released over \$21 million in relief funds. The local governments in each state provided temporary shelters for the homeless and distributed blankets, clothing, food, and building materials. Varig, the Brazilian airline, provided free transportation of relief supplies donated by an American voluntary agency.

Assistance Provided by the United States Government

In response to the flooding in Rio Grande do Sul, the U.S. Ambassador declared that the situation was of a magnitude to warrant USG assistance and authorized a donation of \$15,000 to the local relief effort. A check for this amount was presented to the Governor of Rio Grande do Sul for the purchase of building materials and food.

As the rains continued and the flooding affected a wider area, the U.S. Ambassador issued another disaster declaration, this time for the State of Santa Catarina. The amount of \$25,000 was contributed for the local purchase of blankets, bedclothes, and warm clothing.

TOTAL \$40,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

CWS - sent \$5,000 in cash, 10 MT of skim milk powder worth \$8,130, and 16,850 water purification tablets valued at \$11,000; Interchurch Medical Association donated medical supplies valued at \$33,340; 1,300 blankets were sent from the United States at a cost of \$5,200 and another 3,700 were supplied from an in-country stockpile.

TOTAL \$62,670

Assistance Provided by the International Community

None reported.