

COSTA RICA - Fire

Date: February 29, 1984

Location: San Jose

No. Dead: None

Damage: Approximately \$2.5 million in drugs and medical supplies were destroyed

The Disaster

A fire in a warehouse consumed over \$2.5 million worth of medical and surgical supplies representing the entire store of such supplies in Costa Rica. The supplies had been stored in the warehouse by the Costa Rica Social Security (CRSS) prior to being sent to regional centers which service the nation's network of health posts and hospitals. All hospitals in the country are operated and supplied by CRSS.

While most of the loss did not involve emergency supplies, many articles vital to the provision of medical care were destroyed. The fire depleted these supplies, creating a potentially life-threatening situation.

Action Taken by the Government of Costa Rica (GORC)

The Director of the CRSS, Dr. Guido Miranda, ordered a detailed assessment of the losses from the fire. A report was prepared identifying priority items; total in-country supplies; and anticipated depletion date.

Because the CRSS had no mechanism for emergency procurement and any stocks ordered would take at least two months to arrive, CRSS director Miranda turned to the United States for assistance in obtaining a two-month supply of critical materials.

Assistance Provided by the United States Government

After receiving the request from the Director of CCSS, the Chief of Mission determined that a potentially life-threatening situation created by the loss of medical supplies in the fire existed and declared that U.S. disaster assistance was warranted. On March 9, the Chief of Mission requested assistance from OFDA in procuring a two-month supply of medicaments.

OFDA's Medical Advisor identified the most critically needed supplies as well as sources for obtaining the drugs.

At the request of USAID/Costa Rica, the following supplies were procured in the United States and shipped via air freight to San Jose:

Penicillin V, 400,000 units 200 bottles of 100 tablets	Penicillin G, potassium 5 million units 7,000 bottles of each
Surgical gloves 9,000 pairs	Sulfamethoxazole/Trimethoprim 475 bottles of 500 tablets each
Chromic 0, 54 inch sutures 75 dozen	Sterilization monitors 4 boxes of 100 each

Total cost of procurement and transport of these supplies was \$25,000.

TOTAL \$25,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

None reported.

Assistance Provided by the International Community

PAHO - Resident Representative reviewed CRSS list of required drugs and assisted in establishing priorities relative to the CRSS request.