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Report to the Chairman, Legislation and National Security Subcommittee, Committee on Government Operations, House of Representatives

October 1992

FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

AID Has Been Responsive but Improvements Can Be Made

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National Security and
International Affairs Division

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October 26, 1992

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Chairman, Legislation and National
Security Subcommittee
Committee on Government Operations
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This report provides the results of our review of the effectiveness of the Agency for International Development's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. It contains recommendations to the Administrator of the Agency for International Development that are intended to strengthen the agency's overseas disaster assistance response.

As arranged with your office, unless you publicly announce the contents of this report earlier, we plan no further distribution for 30 days from its issue date. At that time, we will send copies to the Administrator of the Agency for International Development and to other interested parties. We will also make copies available to others upon request.

The report was prepared under the direction of Harold J. Johnson, Director, Foreign Economic Assistance Issues. He can be reached at (202) 275-5790, should you or your staff have any questions. Other major contributors are listed in appendix IV.

Sincerely yours,

Frank C. Conahan

Frank C. Conahan
Assistant Comptroller General

Executive Summary

Purpose

Natural and manmade disasters can cause immense human suffering, loss of life, and property destruction. When disasters strike other countries, the United States has traditionally provided assistance, primarily through the Agency for International Development's (AID) Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). The Chairman, Legislation and National Security Subcommittee, House Committee on Government Operations, asked GAO to (1) assess OFDA's responsiveness to overseas disasters, including the agency's interaction with the United Nations and other nongovernmental organizations; (2) evaluate AID's budget procedures for disaster assistance from 1981 to 1990; (3) review AID's policy on responding to costly long-term or ongoing disasters; and (4) evaluate whether OFDA provides even-handed disaster assistance.

Background

OFDA is the lead U.S. disaster response agency for foreign emergencies, with a mandate to alleviate human suffering caused by both natural and manmade disasters and, to the greatest extent possible, reach those most in need. OFDA works closely with AID's overseas missions, other U.S. government agencies, and private voluntary relief organizations. OFDA also coordinates with and supports the activities of U.N. organizations, other international relief agencies, and the disaster response units of the stricken country. OFDA has a small headquarters staff and funds several field advisors and emergency coordinators.

There are two general categories of disasters: sudden or quick-onset (such as earthquakes and hurricanes) and long-term or ongoing disasters (such as civil strife and drought). Long-term disasters often include sudden changes that require a quick emergency response. Because disasters are often unpredictable and require fast action, Congress authorized special provisions to permit OFDA to use expedited procurement procedures, operate in countries where other assistance is prohibited, and borrow up to $50 million per year from other AID accounts.

Results in Brief

OFDA has been generally responsive to both quick-onset and long-term disasters. Programming and funding flexibility authorized by Congress and OFDA's ability to work well with international and private voluntary organizations are key factors to OFDA's quick and appropriate response. However, OFDA has not systematically identified staffing needs in headquarters and the field or evaluated the effectiveness of its disaster responses. Some AID missions overseas were unprepared to respond to possible disasters. Factors outside of OFDA's control (including slow

delivery of emergency food aid and U.N. coordination difficulties) also impede overall disaster responsiveness.

For most of the decade from 1981 to 1990, OFDA's annual obligations exceeded its annual disaster assistance appropriations. AID's budget requests for this period did not account for OFDA's expanding role in long-term disasters. Accordingly, OFDA relied on special appropriations and funds borrowed from other AID accounts. Borrowed funds were usually not reimbursed, and reliance on them is controversial because it alters congressional budget priorities and ties up resources in a time-consuming process.

Operational differences between OFDA and AID's regional bureaus, an outdated policy on responding to long-term disasters, and the lack of linkage between disaster relief and development activities impede the integration of these activities. The lack of a clear policy on long-term disaster assistance and changing AID roles in Africa have caused friction and disagreement between OFDA and the Africa Bureau and reduced the likelihood that disaster responses will be fully integrated with development programs.

OFDA frequently provides assistance in politically charged environments. It is sometimes pressured by other parts of the executive branch or by congressional members with regard to the timing and level of assistance. However, interviews with numerous U.S. and other officials, a review of documents pertaining to the U.S. response to disasters, and GAO's case studies in Mozambique and Angola indicate that OFDA makes a good-faith effort to provide impartial assistance.

Principal Findings

OFDA Is Responsive

OFDA is viewed as responsive and effective by officials from relief agencies, the United Nations, and other donors. Its responses are generally timely and appropriate, and its responsiveness depends in some measure on its ability to use special authorities to approve purchases, provide supplies and technical assistance speedily, and adjust spending and programming goals to respond to new or emerging needs. OFDA's responsiveness is also a result of its work with private voluntary agencies: OFDA encourages them to share information and resources to build more effective relief programs.

OFDA's headquarters staff and field contractors are generally capable and respected by other disaster response organizations. The field staff provide a valuable technical expertise and familiarity within their geographic regions. However, GAO found that OFDA's lack of a work force plan hindered effectiveness. The agency has not always placed adequate numbers of contractors in the field, and its headquarters staff are often pressed to respond to a number of disasters at once. They often operate in a crisis response mode without standardized procedures. This crisis mode does not permit adequate time for planning and evaluation. OFDA recognizes these weaknesses and has taken steps to add contractors and arrange for external evaluations of its disaster responses.

OFDA operates under a number of constraints that impede disaster responses. War and civil strife create dangerous and uncertain environments, and host governments in disaster-stricken countries are often overwhelmed or incapable of managing disaster responses. Food aid is often a key component of a relief program, but GAO found that in two long-term disasters food deliveries were delayed many months due to inadequate emergency response procedures. Also, the ability and commitment of AID missions to prepare for and respond to disasters varies from country to country. Finally, GAO found that the United Nations did not always take a strong lead in coordinating the disaster responses of its agencies and the international community.

OFDA's Funding Has Not Kept Pace With the Demands of Disaster Response

From 1981 through 1990, AID's annual budget requests and appropriations for disaster assistance remained almost constant, but during this time, OFDA responded to more disasters and assumed a larger role in costly long-term disasters. As a result, since 1983 OFDA's annual obligations have exceeded annual disaster assistance appropriations. Consequently, OFDA also relied on special appropriations and borrowed funds from other AID accounts to fund its activities. Borrowing was particularly heavy during the last 3 years of that period. Borrowing is controversial because it reduces funds available in AID's development accounts and is seen by some congressional committees as altering budget priorities. The committees believe that AID should submit more realistic OFDA budget requests, while the Office of Management and Budget believes that OFDA's funding, combined with the authority to borrow other funds, is adequate. The process of borrowing is time-consuming and creates friction among various AID departments.

Development and Disaster Assistance Are Not Fully Integrated

AID policies that link OFDA activities with AID's ongoing development programs are unclear. Although disaster assistance and development programs should ideally be integrated, certain operational differences between OFDA and AID's regional bureaus and missions impede the full integration of these activities. This has been a particular problem for long-term disasters, such as in several areas of Africa, because the assistance policy does not specifically address the respective responsibilities of OFDA and AID's regional bureaus and missions. Because the policy is unclear, OFDA has assumed an increased role in some African countries, and there has been friction and disagreement between the Africa Bureau and OFDA.

OFDA Tries to Be Even Handed

OFDA's policy is to provide disaster assistance to those most in need, regardless of the political alliances of the host country or the persons in need. However, OFDA often provides assistance in politically charged environments (countries experiencing conflict or civil strife), and the agency occasionally receives pressure or instructions from Congress or higher level executive branch authorities, including the Department of State and the National Security Council, regarding the timing and extent of assistance. In general, OFDA officials have advocated nonpolitical humanitarian assistance and made a good-faith effort to ensure that assistance is provided equitably.

Recommendations

To improve AID's overall effectiveness in responding to foreign disasters, GAO recommends that the Administrator of AID

- identify and provide for adequate OFDA staffing levels;
- require regular post-disaster response evaluations;
- submit more realistic OFDA budget requests;
- develop strategies to better integrate disaster assistance with country development programs; and
- update AID's policy on disaster assistance, including an elaboration of responsibilities for delivering long-term relief.

Agency Comments

As requested, GAO did not obtain written agency comments on this report. However, GAO discussed its contents with Department of State and AID officials and included their comments in the report where appropriate.

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Abbreviations

AID	Agency for International Development
IDA	International Disaster Assistance
OFDA	Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
PMP	prevention, mitigation, and preparedness
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
Renamo	Mozambique National Resistance
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

Introduction

The United States often responds when disasters strike countries in need of assistance. The Agency for International Development's (AID) Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) leads the U.S. response by providing assistance directly and by funding and coordinating the relief efforts of other U.S. agencies and public and private organizations. The United Nations is responsible for coordinating the overall responses of donor governments and nongovernmental organizations.

The United States Helps Other Countries Cope With Disasters

Disasters, both natural and manmade, can cause immense human suffering, loss of life, and property destruction. Developing countries are especially vulnerable to the effects of disasters, because disasters damage their already frail infrastructures and hinder their potential for growth. The United States has a long tradition of providing humanitarian assistance when disasters strike other countries. The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, established AID's authority to furnish such foreign disaster assistance.[1]

AID policy states that the primary responsibility for disaster response rests with the government of the affected country. The United States provides assistance after the U.S. Chief of Mission in the affected country, usually the ambassador, declares a disaster.[2] According to AID policy, this declaration should be made only when (1) the disaster is beyond the affected government's ability to cope, (2) the country desires assistance, and (3) it is in the interests of the United States to provide that assistance. Department of State guidance specifies that the United States may provide emergency relief assistance as a humanitarian service if the assistance is consistent with U.S. foreign policy goals. The Department provides foreign policy guidance to AID to carry out disaster activities.

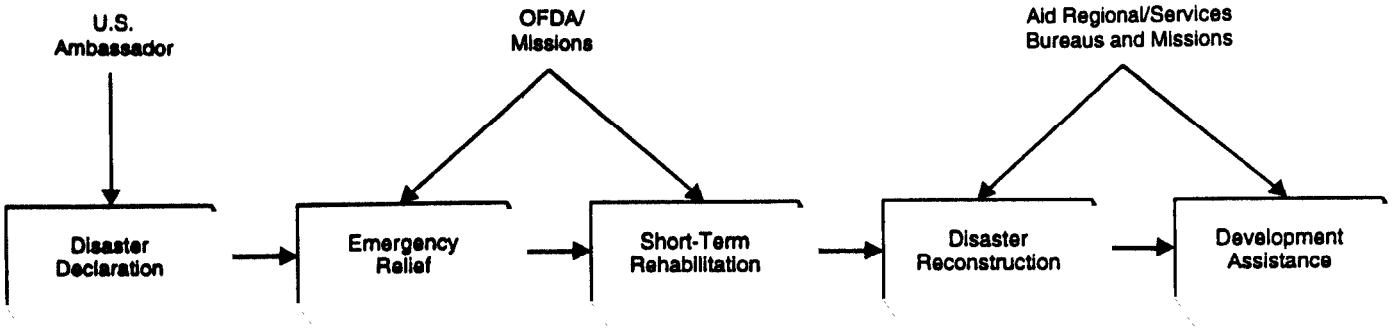
OFDA and AID Missions Are Key Players in Disaster Response

While OFDA is the lead U.S. disaster response agency, AID missions also play an important role in providing the three primary phases of disaster assistance: relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. Generally, OFDA (often working with AID missions) provides relief and rehabilitation assistance, while AID regional bureaus and missions provide reconstruction assistance, as depicted in figure 1.1.

[1] 22 U.S.C. 2292-2292(q).

[2] An Assistant Secretary of State may also declare a disaster in order to begin relief efforts, as occurred in Somalia.

Figure 1.1: Phases of Disaster Assistance and the Entities Responsible for Them



Source: GAO analysis of OFDA and AID data.

OFDA responds to both natural and manmade disasters and, to the greatest extent possible, attempts to reach those most in need. It provides emergency relief assistance, such as shelter and medical supplies, to save lives and reduce suffering. It also funds rehabilitation assistance to restore essential community services and help victims and the affected communities return to a state of self-sufficiency. OFDA funding for this relief and rehabilitation comes primarily from the International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account.[3]

The AID missions' roles in disaster relief assistance are vital to OFDA's effectiveness. The missions work with OFDA to assess damage and estimate needed assistance, coordinate assistance with host country officials and other donors and organizations in the country, manage some elements of assistance, and account for certain disaster funds and relief supplies. Each AID mission is expected to have appointed a disaster officer to coordinate the relief operation in the country, should a disaster strike, and prepare (in advance) a disaster plan to map out response procedures. Depending on the country program, missions may reprogram development funds to support relief and rehabilitation activities.

Reconstruction assistance has a longer term development focus intended to help rebuild communities by restoring or improving resources damaged or destroyed by disasters. The appropriate AID regional bureau and

[3]Established under Public Law 94-161.

missions administer this assistance. Reconstruction activities are normally funded through development assistance or economic support funds, unless Congress specifically appropriates funds through the IDA account.

In some cases, the likelihood of a disaster can be reduced or its effect lessened by helping countries and communities focus on disaster planning or predisaster management. These efforts are known as disaster prevention, mitigation, and preparedness (PMP) activities. For example, PMP can include preparedness training for disaster response officials, early warning systems to help governments predict when a disaster may occur, or mitigation programs to change housing construction so that homes can better withstand hurricanes or typhoons. PMP can be integrated into the disaster response and development phases. OFDA and AID regional bureaus and missions are authorized to fund PMP activities.

OFDA Coordinates With and Funds Other Agencies and Private Voluntary Organizations

The President is authorized by law to appoint a special coordinator to promote maximum effectiveness and coordination among U.S. agencies responding to foreign disasters and between the United States and other donors. The AID Administrator has been delegated this responsibility. In practice, AID, through OFDA, may request and fund assistance from other government agencies to fulfill its mandate, and it is responsible for coordinating with other agencies involved in the disaster response. However, it cannot require other agencies to respond or direct their activities.

Nonetheless, coordination and cooperation do occur, and OFDA often draws on the resources and technical expertise of other U.S. agencies. For example, the U.S. Forest Service and Public Health Service provide technical assistance in emergency relief and PMP activities. Staff from the Centers for Disease Control are sent to disasters to assess medical conditions and needs. The Department of Defense sometimes airlifts and distributes relief supplies. The State Department's Bureau for Refugee Programs becomes involved when persons displaced by disasters cross into neighboring countries, and food aid is provided through AID's Office of Food for Peace—recently brought together with OFDA as part of the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance. Also, OFDA relies on two local government Fire and Rescue Departments, one in Fairfax, Virginia, and one in Miami, Florida, for their search and rescue skills, their communications skills and equipment, and in some cases, their ability to train disaster responders in other countries. OFDA also funds Private

Voluntary Organizations' (PVO) disaster relief programs and helps coordinate their efforts.

The United Nations Coordinates Worldwide Responses

In addition to U.S. agencies and private organizations, international organizations and other governments also respond to disasters. The United Nations has a key role in coordinating these entities' (including OFDA) responses. Until late 1991, the Office of the U.N. Disaster Relief Coordinator was responsible for (1) coordinating the activities of the various U.N. organizations that respond to disasters and (2) receiving contributions for disaster assistance from donors. However, in February 1992, a new Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs was appointed to strengthen the U.N. leadership role in coordinating and responding to disasters.

OFDA Responds to Quick-Onset and Long-Term Disasters

OFDA responds to two inherently different types of disasters—those that are sudden (such as earthquakes, floods, and hurricanes) and those that are long-term or ongoing (such as civil strife, displaced persons, drought, and famine). OFDA's relief and rehabilitation responses vary widely, depending on the type and severity of the disaster, the needs of the stricken country or community, and the availability of needed resources. OFDA may offer technical assistance, commodities, services, transportation of food or other commodities, or allotments to the missions in the affected country.

Quick-onset disasters occur with minimal or no warning and typically require an emergency response mode with clear, predefined operating procedures to facilitate quick decisions and action. These disasters usually require short-term relief efforts. The duration of rehabilitation and reconstruction depends upon the severity of the disaster. For example, following a cyclone, OFDA may provide water purification tablets and oral rehydration supplements. Following a severe flood, OFDA may send an assessment team, medical supplies, and plastic sheeting from one of its stockpiles to provide temporary housing or to repair damaged homes. After a devastating earthquake, OFDA may send a Disaster Assistance Response Team, including a search and rescue team. These teams vary in size and are composed of personnel with expertise in areas such as logistics, water and sanitation, or medical assessment and treatment.

Long-term disasters usually permit a relatively longer advanced warning period, may last for a number of years, and require longer term agreements with PVOs to provide necessary assistance. These chronic disaster

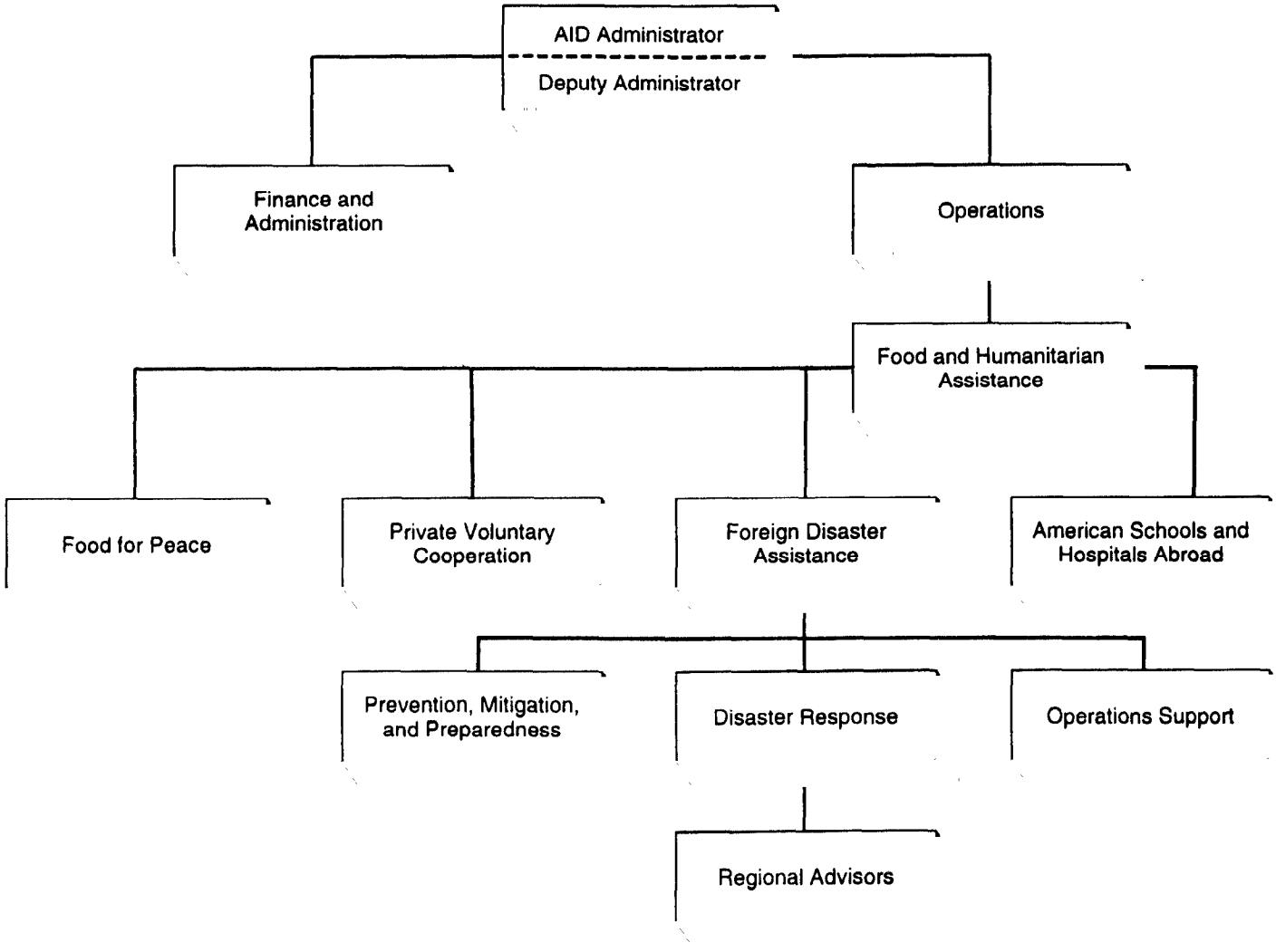
conditions usually necessitate a longer period of relief and rehabilitation and permit more planning and design activities. In response to civil strife or drought OFDA may send food airlifts, provide seeds and tools for planting, develop water supplies, and arrange for medical care for displaced persons. Long-term disasters, however, often involve sudden changes that require a quick, unanticipated emergency response similar to those evoked by a sudden-onset disaster. For example, a sudden relocation of displaced persons due to a perceived or real threat requires speedy program adjustments and interventions such as food airlifts, until regular supply lines can be reestablished.

Appendix I lists OFDA's disaster responses in 1989 and 1990.

OFDA Was Recently Reorganized

In July 1991, OFDA reorganized its disaster response structure. Under the old structure, OFDA was organized geographically. Each geographic unit was responsible for both disaster response and PMP programs for its region. However, a recent PMP evaluation revealed that OFDA had not devoted sufficient attention to developing a long-term PMP strategy because staff efforts were often focused on the most recent crisis. As a result, regions with more frequent or time-consuming disasters received less PMP planning. Under the new structure, a small group is dedicated to implementing a new multiyear PMP strategy and another group is responsible solely for disaster responses. The disaster response group still assigns responsibility according to geographic area. Figure 1.2 depicts OFDA's position within AID and its new organizational structures.

Figure 1.2: OFDA's Organizational Placement Within AID as of August 1992



Source: AID's Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance.

Congress Gave AID Special Authorities to Facilitate Disaster Responses

Recognizing that disasters are often unpredictable and may require a quick and flexible response, Congress authorized special provisions to facilitate disaster responses. The Foreign Assistance Act states that the President can furnish disaster relief and rehabilitation assistance to any foreign country, international organization, or PVO, subject to the limit of fiscal year appropriations, "notwithstanding any other provision of this or any other act."[4] AID relies on this authority to provide disaster assistance in countries where other U.S. assistance is prohibited by appropriations' restrictions. Under this authority AID also uses expedited procurement procedures for disasters without adhering to source or origin limitations, competition in contracting, cargo preference, or other requirements. AID's policy, however, is to use the expedited procedures only for emergencies and to follow standard procurement procedures for routine purchases.

Congress also authorized the use, or borrowing, of up to $50 million per year from other AID accounts to support disaster assistance efforts. These accounts may be reimbursed when Congress appropriates additional disaster assistance funds, but reimbursement usually does not take place.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The Chairman, Legislation and National Security Subcommittee, House Committee on Government Operations, requested that we assess OFDA's responsiveness to overseas disasters over the last 10 years and provide any appropriate recommendations for improving the agency's effectiveness. Specifically, our objectives were to (1) assess OFDA's responsiveness to overseas disasters, including the agency's interaction with the United Nations and other nongovernmental organizations; (2) evaluate AID's budget procedures for OFDA from 1981 to 1990; (3) review AID policy on responding to costly, long-term disasters; and (4) evaluate whether OFDA provides even-handed disaster assistance.

We conducted our work at AID headquarters in Washington and performed fieldwork to review OFDA's responses to several sudden and long-term disasters. To assess coordination, organizational issues, and relief and response procedures, we interviewed OFDA, the AID Directorate for Policy, Food for Peace, the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance, and AID regional bureau officials; headquarters staff from various cooperating PVOs; numerous disaster experts with years of response experience; and officials from several U.S. government agencies, including the Departments of State and Defense. We also met with officials from the U.N.

[4]Commonly known as the notwithstanding clause, this provision is contained in 22 U.S.C. 2292(b).

Development Program, Children's Fund, and Disaster Relief Coordinator. We reviewed all current and proposed AID policy papers, regulations, guidance, and implementation manuals related to disaster assistance. We attended numerous OFDA disaster response and planning meetings and participated in training sessions for disaster assistance response teams to help us understand prescribed methods and operations.

We studied two quick-onset disasters and two long-term disasters in detail. In February 1992, we visited Barbados, St. Kitts, Antigua, and Montserrat to study OFDA's response to Hurricane Hugo in 1989 and Costa Rica to study OFDA's response to the 1991 earthquake there. In March and April 1992, we visited Angola and Mozambique to review OFDA's past and current response to the areas' long-term disasters of civil strife and drought.[5] For these case studies, we met with OFDA regional advisors and emergency coordinators, AID and State Department officials, national and provincial host government officials, various U.N. officials, and PVO officials operating programs funded by AID. Although our conclusions based on individual case studies cannot be generalized to all of OFDA's disaster responses, information we received from disaster experts with years of experience working with OFDA generally supported our findings. Also, for additional perspective on OFDA responses to specific quick-onset disasters, we interviewed the AID mission director in Bangladesh and the mission disaster relief officer in the Philippines.

To review OFDA's budgeting procedures and other matters related to financial management and responsiveness, we met with AID contracting officers and various officials from OFDA, AID's financial management and budgeting offices, and the Office of Management and Budget. We constructed a 10-year history of OFDA's funding and obligations from 1981 to 1990, using OFDA and AID Finance and Administration records. To analyze the number of OFDA disaster responses and OFDA obligations for long-term disasters, we reviewed OFDA's reports on the commodities and services provided for each disaster. The obligations for disaster responses do not reflect activities administered and funded by AID missions independent of OFDA or funds provided by other U.S. agencies (such as the State Department's Bureau for Refugee Programs and the Department of Defense) and not reimbursed by OFDA.

We did not evaluate the responsiveness of other U.S. government agencies to disasters, except when it had a direct impact on OFDA's responsiveness

[5]Appendixes II and III describe the circumstances leading up to the disasters and discuss conditions in the countries at the time of our visits.

in our case studies. We also did not evaluate (1) whether disaster response supplies and equipment were properly accounted for by OFDA and AID missions, (2) how chiefs of mission determined that the affected country could not cope before declaring a disaster, and (3) whether OFDA's PMP program was effective. OFDA has recently revised its PMP approach, and it was too early to evaluate its effectiveness.

We conducted our review between June 1991 and August 1992 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. As requested by the Subcommittee Chairman, we did not obtain written agency comments on this report. However, we discussed its contents with Department of State and AID officials and have incorporated their comments where appropriate.

OFDA Is Responsive, but There Is Room for Improvement

OFDA is viewed by United Nations, donor, host government, and relief agency officials as an effective relief organization. Key to OFDA's responsiveness are (1) the programming and funding flexibilities permitted by the agency's legislative charter and (2) OFDA's dedicated staff and contractors. While OFDA is favorably viewed, we identified several areas, including staffing levels, response procedures, and evaluation policies, in which improvements could be made. Numerous external factors also affect OFDA's ability to respond to disasters. These include dangerous operating environments inherent in certain disaster responses, slow food deliveries, and U.N. leadership weaknesses.

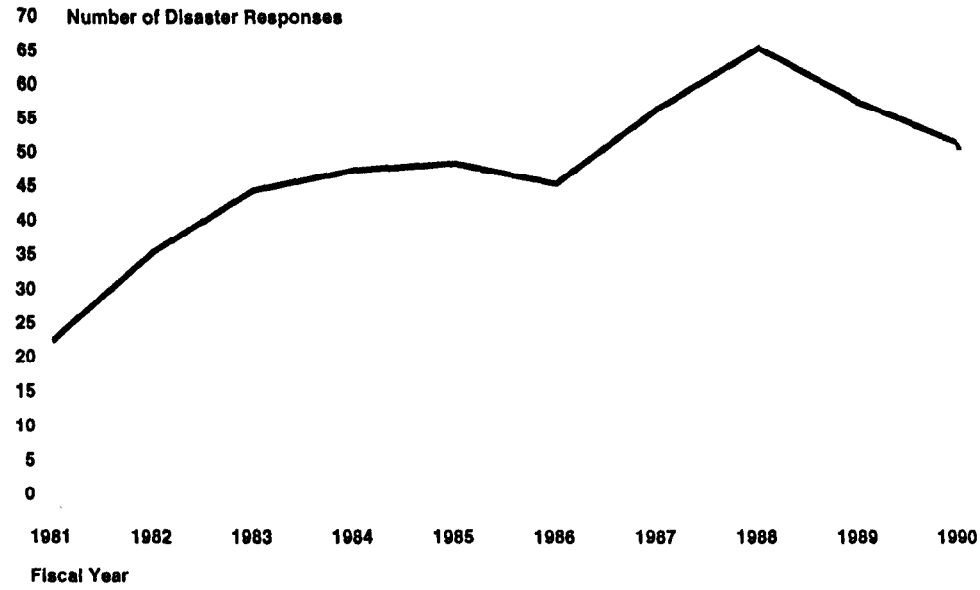
OFDA Is Responsive to Disasters

OFDA is considered a leader in the disaster assistance field, according to officials from U.S. government agencies, private relief agencies, and international organizations. On the basis of our review, we found that OFDA's assistance was generally timely and appropriate. Its staff and contractors were dedicated and usually quite capable, and they worked well with PVOs. We found that OFDA, although a small organization, has had a significant international impact. Officials we met with told us that, in the absence of OFDA, lives would have been lost and suffering would have increased.

Number of OFDA Disaster Responses Has Increased Over the 1980s

From 1981 to 1990, OFDA has responded to an increasing number of disasters. As shown in figure 2.1, OFDA's responses to declared disasters increased from 22 in 1981 to a high of 65 in 1988. In 1991, OFDA responded to 63 declared disasters.

Figure 2.1: OFDA Disaster Responses Per Year From 1981 to 1990

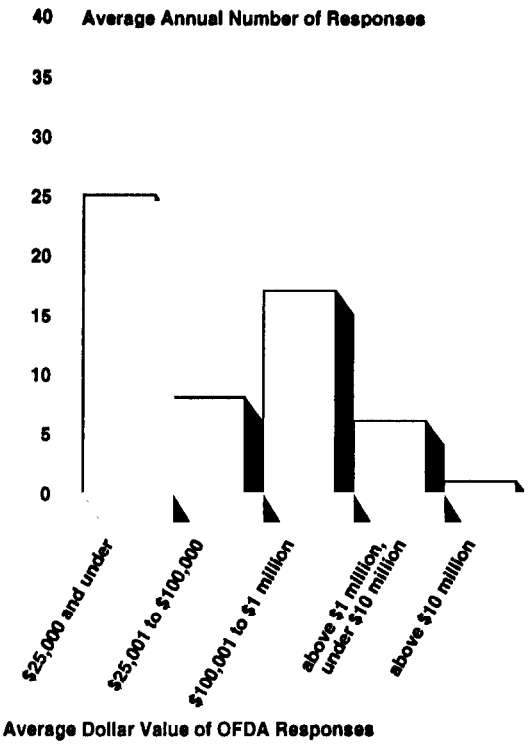


Note: Data indicates the number of newly declared disasters OFDA responded to each year.

Source: OFDA Commodity/Service Reports.

The costs of OFDA disaster responses vary greatly. When the chief of a U.S. diplomatic mission declares a disaster, he or she has the authority to provide up to $25,000 of assistance in cash, supplies, or services from the IDA account. In about 44 percent of the disasters to which OFDA responded from 1981 to 1990, it contributed $25,000 or less. On the other hand, OFDA contributed from $1 million to over $10 million per year for about 12 percent of the disasters to which it responded. These more costly disasters typically required intensive staff involvement over an extended period. Figure 2.2 shows the average number of disaster responses by annual cost over the 10-year period.

Figure 2.2: Average Cost of OFDA Disaster Responses From 1981 to 1990



Source: OFDA Commodity/Service Reports.

OFDA's Speedy Programming Approvals and Funding Flexibility Are Crucial to Emergency Responsiveness

OFDA's relatively quick approval of program proposals and requests for funding, supplies, and technical assistance are key to its responsiveness. Private relief agency and AID mission officials cited OFDA's authority to use expedited procurement procedures as a major reason for the agency's successful relief efforts. For example, electrical services needed to be reestablished after Hurricane Hugo struck the Caribbean, and within about a week OFDA had notified a contractor, signed a contract, and brought the electrical crews and equipment to St. Kitts and Nevis. An AID official in the Philippines said that the United States was always the first to respond to disasters there, and he credited OFDA's quick access to funds and assistance as the main reason.

Private voluntary agency officials said that in situations in which time was of the essence, OFDA's grant approval processes for longer term programs usually moved quickly and avoided the time-consuming review and clearance procedures of most AID programs. They said grants could be fully

approved within 2 months, whereas the normal AID process could take as many as 6 to 8 months. However, we were also told of examples in which final approval of the grant was delayed several weeks to several months, although OFDA had preliminarily approved a grant proposal and PVO had begun the emergency program on the basis of a letter of intent. OFDA is aware of such instances and has taken steps to smooth the entire approval process.

Also, OFDA has flexibility in funding decisions. It is authorized to pay for aspects of an emergency program that would not be funded through other sources but are critical to the success of the overall relief effort. For example, OFDA often funds the transport costs for airlifting food aid to extremely remote areas. Also, unlike typical AID programs, OFDA can adjust spending and programming goals to meet new or emerging problems. In Angola, funding originally intended to provide seeds and tools to displaced persons was reprogrammed to provide food to others in Angola facing a more immediate food shortage.[1]

OFDA Generally Provides Appropriate Assistance

OFDA's mandate is to alleviate suffering, save lives, and reach those most in need. During our fieldwork we found OFDA's assistance to be appropriate, given the agency's mandate and operating constraints. OFDA's assistance is usually based upon an assessment of needs. Needs assessments can be conducted by a variety of organizations, including OFDA, the in-country AID mission, the host government, U.N. agencies, or PVOs. OFDA may draw upon one or more of these sources of information to craft its emergency response. In Mozambique, World Vision (a U.S.-based PVO), in cooperation with the host government, identified specific populations and conducted an assessment of needs prior to requesting substantial OFDA assistance. We found that such needs assessments provided a fairly accurate account of the targeted populations' problems and needs in the countries we visited, given the security and logistical constraints that often make it difficult to conduct thorough assessments in disaster situations. However, we also learned of instances in which OFDA provided assistance requested by the U.S. embassy in the absence of a needs assessment, only to learn later that this assistance may not have been the most effective response.

According to PVO relief officials in Angola and Mozambique, OFDA assistance was targeted to reach those most in need and, on the basis of our review, we believe that OFDA generally makes a good-faith effort to

[1]Appendixes II and III provide additional information on the disasters in Angola and Mozambique and OFDA's response to them.

reach the targeted populations. However, OFDA cannot always ensure that its assistance is distributed fairly. For example, after Hurricane Gilbert hit Jamaica in 1988, the President of Jamaica determined that relief supplies should be distributed by the two political parties rather than by Jamaica's Office of Disaster Preparedness. As a result, relief supplies were sent before agreements on end use were made, and OFDA could not be sure the supplies reached the intended victims.

OFDA Possesses a Small but Dedicated Staff

OFDA's small but dedicated staff and its personal service contractors play an important role in the agency's responsiveness. As of May 1992, OFDA had a total of 25 direct-hire staff: the director, a deputy director, 8 persons in the disaster response unit, 3 in the PMP unit, 5 for operations support, and 7 for administrative support. These staff are supported by 11 employees of Labat Anderson Incorporated, a contractor responsible for OFDA's information management. OFDA's staff is also complemented by 5 disaster assistance support staff provided through an agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

OFDA's staff often work long hours under stressful conditions to respond to emergencies. A total of 6 disaster officers and 2 managers are responsible for developing OFDA's relief program. With the support of other OFDA staff, they monitor and manage disaster responses, review grant proposals received from nongovernmental organizations, coordinate with U.S. government agencies, respond to requests from overseas AID missions and PVOs operating in the field, and sometimes visit disaster sites as members of response or assessment teams. As of May 1992, OFDA officials were arranging for new disaster response training for their generalist headquarters staff. OFDA also has staff with specialized skills in areas such as logistics. Officials in the field said the staff were responsive to their needs during emergencies.

In addition to the Washington staff, OFDA employs personal services contractors, both as regional advisors and emergency coordinators. These staff enhance its responsiveness. OFDA has four regional advisors for Latin America and the Caribbean (based in Costa Rica) and one for Africa (based in Ethiopia). The regional advisors in Costa Rica are normally employed in activities to improve disaster preparedness and response capabilities; the advisors provide training, technical skills, and assistance. The regional advisor in Ethiopia designs and monitors OFDA-funded disaster responses in Africa. Regional advisors from both regions are also dispatched to

disaster sites where they provide assessments based on their technical expertise and familiarity with the region.

In countries where OFDA has large emergency relief programs, it has hired emergency coordinators to manage the programs. For example, in 1991, OFDA hired a personal services contractor with 35 years of emergency response experience to direct disaster relief operations in Angola. OFDA has also funded other positions overseas, as necessary, to manage relief projects and/or advise on PMP issues. Host government, relief, and AID mission officials in Central America, the Caribbean, and Africa spoke highly of OFDA's regional advisors and other contractors and characterized them as experienced professionals who provided great support to AID missions and host governments.

OFDA Works Well With Nongovernmental Organizations

OFDA contracts with and funds PVOs and other nongovernmental organizations for various disaster-related activities. It actively encourages their sharing information and resources in order to build a more effective relief program. In Washington, OFDA partially funds a consortium of nongovernmental organizations and a disaster information center to promote coordination and information-sharing about disaster responses. Biennially, OFDA sponsors a PVO conference to bring together members of the disaster relief community to improve cooperation and provide a forum for exchanging experiences and ideas. In Angola, OFDA encouraged two PVOs to combine a seeds and tools distribution with a food distribution to more fully meet the needs of a displaced population.

OFDA's Responsiveness Could Be Further Improved

Although OFDA has a small and highly dedicated staff, it and others have frequently cited staff shortages as a problem. Also, OFDA does not follow standard response procedures, and this has impeded its effectiveness in some circumstances. OFDA recognizes these concerns and has already begun to take steps to implement changes.

OFDA Lacks a Work Force Plan

According to relief and U.S. government agencies, OFDA's effectiveness has been constrained by staff shortages in headquarters and the field. In many cases, particularly when OFDA is responding to several major disasters concurrently, its staff has not been sufficiently large to adequately support all the disaster responses. For example, in March and April 1991, OFDA responded to a serious flood in Malawi, civil strife in Somalia, displaced persons fleeing Iraq during the Persian Gulf War, an earthquake that hit

Costa Rica and Panama, a devastating cyclone in Bangladesh, and nine smaller emergencies. OFDA recognized this weakness and added six personal services contractors to its headquarters operations in May 1992. These contractors will provide additional backup and administrative support for OFDA's staff. According to AID officials, although hiring personal services contractors in Washington is normally prohibited throughout AID, the notwithstanding clause permits OFDA to do so.

In the field, OFDA has not always ensured adequate staffing to implement and manage OFDA-funded programs. In Angola, the emergency relief program functioned without a coordinator for several months until a personal services contractor was hired. During this period, U.S. embassy officials in Windhoek, Namibia, with limited experience in emergency relief activities, directed the cross-border food operations into southeastern Angola. Though the program was generally considered successful, these officials acknowledged that their inexperience resulted in program delays and inefficiencies. Also, although OFDA spends most of its resources in Africa, there is only one regional advisor there. Her ability to implement preparedness and mitigation activities in the region is limited due to the pressing need for emergency humanitarian assistance there. Relief officials in Africa commented that additional regional advisors were needed and would greatly enhance overall emergency responsiveness and preparedness. OFDA officials have said they plan to add regional advisors so that there are at least two in each of three regions: Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean. As of July 1992, however, only the Latin America and the Caribbean office had at least two advisors. OFDA officials said that they must obtain approval from the U.S. chief of mission in the country where the regional advisor will reside before adding regional advisors, and, in Asia, this approval has been difficult to obtain.

In a March 1992 report on AID management,[2] we pointed out that AID had not instituted a work force plan to ensure that its staffing needs were clearly identified and documented. Similarly, in this review we found that OFDA had not developed a comprehensive work force plan to address its staffing needs. Instead, it has added personal services contractors in response to specific needs on a case-by-case basis. A work force plan would identify staffing needs, set staff responsibilities, and assess whether contractors performing ongoing OFDA work should more appropriately be staffed as direct-hire AID employees.

[2]AID Management: Strategic Management Can Help AID Face Current and Future Challenges (GAO/NSIAD-92-100, Mar. 6, 1992).

OFDA Does Not Follow Standard Disaster Response Procedures

OFDA's strength has been its quick, flexible response capacity, but the agency operates in a crisis management mode with little emphasis on standard operating procedures. Disasters often require that OFDA make critical decisions during periods of uncertainty. On the basis of meetings we attended and interviews with emergency relief experts working with OFDA, we found that OFDA did not regularly use a standard procedure to frame these decisions or to ensure clear communication and established responsibilities among OFDA and other AID staff. Disaster experts told us that OFDA's responses could be more efficient and effective, if the agency had standard operating procedures applicable to all disasters. Currently, it reacts differently to each disaster as it occurs. Standard operating procedures would be especially helpful for sudden-onset disasters. Also, although OFDA has several procedures manuals, we found that they were not regularly or uniformly followed. However, in June 1992, OFDA instituted a new disaster response checklist designed to provide a uniform structure and improve internal communication during disaster responses. OFDA is also working to develop guidelines for determining the appropriate response for different disaster types.

In looming and long-term disasters, OFDA has the opportunity to anticipate some events and plan its response. We observed, however, that OFDA did not always take advantage of these opportunities and continued to respond reactively rather than proactively. For example, Angola has been experiencing widespread and fluid population movements. Thousands of refugees and displaced persons have been spontaneously returning to their homes as a result of the cease-fire and improved security situation there. Despite the knowledge that these population movements have been (and will be) continuing, OFDA, AID officials, and the PVO community have not developed a comprehensive program to meet the needs of this population. We believe that this is, in part, because OFDA commonly operates in a crisis management mode, and its staff have heavy work loads.[3]

Under the existing arrangement in Angola, PVOs direct the programming process by assessing the needs of a particular population. The PVOs prepare and submit a proposal to OFDA for funding. If the proposal is approved, the PVOs then procure the needed supplies and commodities and begin project implementation. The process is repeated when another population needing assistance emerges or becomes identified. Development of a more comprehensive needs assessment and a long-term umbrella program (which would include in-country prepositioning of food,

[3]In addition, the ongoing disaster responsibilities of AID regional bureaus, missions, and OFDA are not always clear.

seeds, tools, and medicine and activating the program whenever needy populations were identified) could offer a more efficient response. In June 1992, OFDA's disaster response managers said they recognized the need to institutionalize additional planning for looming and long-term, ongoing disasters and had begun to try to structure more time for long-range planning sessions.

Responses Are Not Systematically Evaluated

OFDA does not routinely conduct lessons learned studies or evaluations of its emergency responses. As a result, valuable information on which strategies or responses were most effective are lost. Unlike grantees funded by development assistance resources, OFDA grantees are not required to conduct evaluations of their emergency programs.

OFDA officials told us that they had tried collecting lessons learned from prior disaster responses so that their disaster officers could learn from them. However, when we reviewed the files, we found that the system had been inactive for over a year and was not systematically used before that.

OFDA conducted only five thorough response evaluations from 1981 to 1990, mostly for very large, quick-onset relief efforts such as earthquakes. About 44 percent of OFDA's disaster responses cost between $25,000 and $1 million, yet OFDA has conducted almost no studies on disaster responses within this range. Also, OFDA has not conducted evaluations of its long-term disaster responses. A study of the overall U.S. response to the African famine in the mid-1980s was conducted by AID, however. An evaluation of the responses to Angola's cease-fire and demobilization process could provide valuable lessons for Mozambique as it moves toward a resolution of its long-standing civil war. In recognition of the importance of evaluations, in May 1992 OFDA proposed hiring an outside contractor to develop a methodology for reviewing disaster responses on a regular basis and to conduct some evaluations. As of July 1992, the proposal had not been finalized by AID's contracting office.

OFDA's Responsiveness Is Hindered by External Factors Beyond the Agency's Control

Various external constraints impede OFDA's responses to disasters. Relief operations must often cope with limited access to affected regions because of destroyed physical infrastructure, security problems, or disrupted communications networks. This difficult logistical operating environment affects OFDA's ability to conduct comprehensive needs assessments and deliver needed assistance.

In countries like Angola and Mozambique, war and civil strife create dangerous and uncertain operating environments. Relief officials must balance the demands of the relief operation with the need to maintain personal safety. For example, in Angola, the indiscriminate use of land mines during the conflict still poses a serious threat throughout parts of the country. Banditry also poses an ongoing problem. In Angola and Mozambique, attacks on relief operations resulted in deaths and injuries to relief workers and the destruction or pilferage of relief equipment and supplies. War also causes the sudden movement of populations. These populations are usually in dire need of food and medical assistance; however, their rapid movement makes reaching them problematic. In the absence of peace, relief operations can only be marginally successful.

OFDA must work closely with host governments, AID's Office of Food for Peace, AID overseas missions, and the appropriate U.N. agencies. These organizations do not always have the same mandate or objectives as OFDA, and their combined efforts affect the overall relief effort.

Host Governments Are Often Ineffective in Managing Relief Operations

Governments of countries where disasters occur are primarily responsible for responding to the disaster. However, countries are frequently unable to deal with disasters by themselves, and OFDA's assistance is meant to supplement and support the governments' efforts. In many cases, host governments do not have the capacity to effectively manage the disaster response or may be overwhelmed by the disaster. In some countries experiencing long-term disasters, governments may be focusing attention and resources on civil strife or disturbances. As a result, OFDA often conducts its disaster program with minimal leadership or cooperation from the host government. Many of OFDA's PMP programs are intended to improve a country's capacity to respond to disasters, and government officials in Costa Rica said OFDA played an important role in helping them develop an effective disaster response agency.

Slow Food Aid Deliveries Impede Some Emergency Responses

A successful relief effort in long-term emergencies often relies on a food aid component. OFDA funds certain costs for PVO administration and delivery of food aid. PVOs and OFDA rely on AID's Office of Food for Peace to process requests for Title II emergency food aid and the U.S.

Department of Agriculture to procure the commodities and arrange for their shipment to the affected country.[4] During our review, we found significant delays in food deliveries in both Angola and Mozambique.

In Angola, PVO officials told us that most of two separate shipments of food aid requested by them for the drought-stricken Cuando Cubango province arrived 6 months to 1 year after the request. They submitted a request for emergency food in August 1990, but the Food for Peace office did not approve the request until November. A small amount of food meant for Mozambique was diverted to Angola and arrived in Mozambique in November 1990, but most of the requested food did not arrive until September 1991. In addition, the first shipment of food requested by another PVO in November 1990 arrived in June 1991.

According to PVO officials in Mozambique, Title II food for use by a PVO in emergency airlifts to displaced persons was due to arrive in November 1991, before the onset of the "hungry season."[5] The food arrived in April 1992 during the normal harvest season. Typically, food is timed to arrive during the hungry season in order to fill the food deficit and not distort market prices during harvest season. As it turned out, due to the drought-induced crop failure, the late food arrival did not negatively affect market prices. The PVO borrowed food from World Food Program stocks in order to keep its emergency airlift program operational until the scheduled Title II food shipment arrived.

We discussed these examples with Food for Peace officials who said their procedures were not designed to respond to immediate needs for food and that the delays were caused by a number of factors. They pointed out that the approval process has many steps, and delays can occur at any step. They also said that the U.S. Department of Agriculture procurement procedures are cumbersome. For example, a proposal may not contain all of the necessary information for approval, and Food for Peace staff must contact the overseas mission and/or the PVO to gather the information. In some cases, the responsible desk officers that must also approve the proposals are not available or do not give the request their top priority. They also said that the Office of Food for Peace is understaffed, and

[4]Title II of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954, as amended by Public Law 101-624, authorizes the President to provide food aid to foreign countries for emergency and nonemergency humanitarian and development purposes.

[5]"Hungry season" is a term that refers to the period in Africa's agricultural cycle prior to the main harvest when food reserves are traditionally very low.

therefore, staff do not always have the time to shepherd a proposal through the lengthy approval process. We did not review whether they had requested additional staff or had developed a work force plan. The officials said that although they had taken steps to speed their emergency processes in a few cases, these were exceptions.

A relief official with considerable emergency food aid experience told us normal tendering and delivery procedures were inappropriate for emergency food requests. Even though Food for Peace has a significant emergency component, it does not have a notwithstanding clause similar to OFDA's that would allow it greater flexibility in responding to emergency requests. The scope of our review was not sufficient to determine why food aid takes so long to reach the field or to permit us to make recommendations to speed deliveries. However, we are currently conducting a review of Title II food aid and, in May 1992, we began a review of U.S. emergency food aid provided to the World Food Program. These reviews will study the reasons for delays, both at the Office of Food for Peace and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Mission Commitment and Ability to Respond to Disasters Varies

AID missions play a vital role in disaster responses, but their ability and commitment to prepare for and respond to disasters varies from mission to mission. OFDA officials stated that, in some cases, missions in disaster-prone countries had included disaster preparedness and response capabilities in their overall planning process and could initiate responses with minimal OFDA guidance. In Bangladesh, the AID mission utilized networks and PVOs with extensive experience to assess needs and provide OFDA-funded assistance following the 1991 cyclone. However, U.S. mission officials said some missions are too small or too thinly staffed to devote adequate time and attention to disaster response planning and PMP programs. For example, the U.S. embassy in Antigua had only two U.S. staff at the time of our fieldwork, and the AID mission responsible for Antigua is in Barbados. These missions often depend on OFDA when a disaster strikes.

AID Handbook 8 requires all AID missions to prepare a Mission Disaster Relief Plan, but the AID Inspector General found that many did not. A 1988 AID audit found that, of 68 field offices, 19 did not have plans, 5 were in the process of drafting them, and 9 did not respond to the Inspector General's request for information. None of the 35 plans that were submitted fully complied with AID regulations. According to the Inspector General, the AID regional bureaus, rather than OFDA, had the authority to require that

missions comply with AID regulations, and the overseas missions needed technical assistance. In 1988, the Department of State began to require that U.S. missions prepare an emergency action plan to address how to respond to in-country emergencies and disasters affecting U.S. citizens abroad. The plan can also fulfill the disaster planning requirements of Handbook 8 if it is approved by AID. State Department officials said that when embassies submitted the combined plans, they forwarded a copy to OFDA but did not check the plans for compliance with Handbook 8. OFDA officials said that they had begun to receive more plans, but they had not closely monitored which missions still did not have disaster response plans on file.

Also, in some disaster-stricken countries, there is no AID mission, or the AID program has been curtailed. For example, as of September 1992, the United States did not formally recognize the government of Angola. Disaster assistance there was coordinated by an OFDA contractor under the direction of the U.S. Liaison Officer there. There were no AID personnel or other staff resources, beyond basic administrative support, available to support the disaster program. When cross-border assistance through Namibia to southern Angola began in 1989, AID did not have a development program in Namibia.

U.N. Coordination Is Not Always Effective

Governments in countries where disaster strikes are ultimately responsible for the coordination of emergency assistance. Ideally, coordination should involve sharing information on relief needs, organizing responses among various donors, and avoiding duplication. Coordination is crucial since in many cases resources are limited and the need for assistance is great. Even under the most difficult circumstances, donor organizations and PVOs have valuable information that should be systematically collected and shared with each other and the government. However, governments are often ineffective at coordinating the emergency response, either because they are distracted by the disaster or do not have sufficient institutional capacity. The United States is but one of many donors and may have a limited role beyond providing financial, food, and other resources. In the absence of strong host government leadership, the role of the United Nations takes on added importance. Because of its status and leverage with host governments and the international donor community, the United Nations has a key and unique role in coordinating disaster assistance efforts.

We did not review the effectiveness of U.N. relief operations, but relief officials we spoke with in Angola and Mozambique told us that the United Nations had not been consistently effective at coordinating the disaster programs there. OFDA has provided funds to promote U.N. coordination in both countries. We were told that coordinating meetings often lacked substantive discussions and information-sharing and that resources were not always used most effectively as a result. We were also told that the effectiveness of the coordination depended on the leadership of the U.N. resident representative or coordinator in-country. For example, in Mozambique, a newly appointed resident representative has had some success in improving coordination.

We were also told by OFDA and other relief officials that the United Nations often does not take a strong leadership role in coordinating disasters in other countries. Several independent U.N. organizations have a role in disaster responses, including the U.N. Development Program, Children's Fund, and Disaster Relief Coordinator. Officials from these organizations told us that the lack of strong leadership has been, in part, caused by unclear or conflicting mandates among U.N. organizations.

Recognizing the need to strengthen and better coordinate the U.N. system's delivery of emergency humanitarian assistance, in February 1992 the Secretary General appointed an Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs to coordinate U.N. emergency assistance efforts around the world. Under the General Assembly's aegis and the Secretary General's direction, the Under Secretary General's responsibilities include

- coordinating and facilitating the U.N. system's assistance in those emergencies requiring a coordinated response;
- facilitating access to emergency areas for rapid delivery of emergency assistance;
- serving as a central focal point with governments and intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations concerning U.N. emergency relief operations and, when appropriate and necessary, mobilizing their emergency relief capacities; and
- promoting the smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and reconstruction as relief operations under his aegis are phased out.

The United States advocated and strongly supported this appointment, which requires a redefinition of roles among the various U.N. agencies engaged in emergency relief efforts. Because the strengthening of the U.N. role in responding to disasters is very recent, it is too early to assess the

Under Secretary General's progress in coordinating the delivery of emergency assistance by the U.N. system.

Conclusions

OFDA's disaster response performance has been noteworthy, particularly given the increased number of responses over the 1980s and various operating constraints beyond OFDA's control. OFDA uses the authority granted by the notwithstanding clause to respond quickly and creatively to many different types of disasters. The staff and contractors design assistance to alleviate suffering and save lives. OFDA often operates in a crisis management mode, but its work has been impeded because it does not have a comprehensive work force plan or follow standardized operating procedures that would enable it to use staff resources more efficiently. Also, OFDA does not routinely evaluate the effectiveness of its responses, and as a result cannot take full advantage of lessons learned. OFDA has taken numerous steps to address these issues, such as hiring additional personal services contractors; however, we believe that a work force plan that provided a comprehensive solution to OFDA's staffing problems would have a more permanent effect on its effectiveness than ad hoc steps that provide interim solutions.

Many factors outside of OFDA's control also affect the agency's response efforts. Numerous organizations and donors with varying objectives and resources must work together, often in difficult circumstances with inadequate information and little support from the host government. Food aid is often a vital component of successful relief programs, especially for long-term disasters; however, slow food deliveries in Mozambique and Angola have hampered relief efforts.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Administrator of AID

- develop a work force plan for OFDA to ensure that its headquarters and field staffing needs are clearly identified and documented, and on the basis of a thoroughly justified work force plan, request that the Office of Management and Budget authorize adequate staffing levels for OFDA and
- require that OFDA perform or arrange for regular evaluations of its disaster responses and require grantees of larger OFDA programs to conduct program evaluations.

OFDA's Funding Has Not Kept Pace With Its Responsibilities

During the last decade (1981-90), OFDA's spending grew without a corresponding increase in annual disaster assistance appropriations. AID's budget requests for IDA funds did not take into account OFDA's expanded role in costly long-term disasters and higher number of disaster responses. To meet its funding requirements, OFDA increasingly relied on its borrowing authority; however, consistent use of borrowing authority alters congressional priorities by shifting funds from development assistance to disaster assistance outside the normal annual budgeting process. AID would benefit from improving its budget projections for disaster assistance requirements, particularly with respect to long-term disasters.

OFDA Relied on Borrowing Authority

OFDA receives funding from three sources: annual IDA appropriations, special IDA appropriations, and funds borrowed from other AID accounts (such as Development Assistance or Economic Support Funds). For most of the 10 years from 1981 to 1990, OFDA's obligations exceeded annual IDA appropriations, forcing the agency to rely on borrowing authority and, to a lesser extent, special appropriations.

Congress annually provides appropriations for disaster assistance through the IDA account, of which OFDA is the primary user. In some cases, Congress specifically earmarks a portion of the annual appropriations for a particular country. Congress also provides special appropriations to the IDA account to address unexpected immediate and long-term disaster requirements, such as the 1985 supplemental appropriation of $137.5 million for Emergency Relief and Recovery Assistance for Africa. According to AID officials, earmarked funds and special appropriations for disaster relief and rehabilitation were usually administered by OFDA, whereas those for reconstruction were usually administered by AID's regional bureaus.

In fiscal year 1981, Congress granted AID the authority to spend up to $50 million annually for disaster assistance from other AID accounts. This privilege has become known as OFDA's "borrowing authority." Since disasters cannot always be predicted, borrowing authority was to provide AID with the administrative flexibility to increase funds for OFDA by reallocating funds from other accounts. For example, in fiscal year 1988, OFDA borrowed $2.8 million from Africa Bureau development accounts to respond to the civil strife disaster in Mozambique. OFDA may repay borrowed amounts if Congress subsequently appropriates additional funds, but repayment is not required. From 1981 to 1990, the borrowed funds were usually not reimbursed.

Table 3.1 lists the resources available to OFDA (through annual IDA appropriations, special appropriations, and borrowing authority) and OFDA's obligations for fiscal years 1981-90.

Table 3.1: OFDA's Resources and Obligations for Fiscal Years 1981-90

Dollars in millions

	Appropriations and other resources					Obligations		
Fiscal year	Annual IDA	Country earmarks	Unearmarked IDA[a]	Special IDA[b]	Borrowed funds	IDA	Borrowed funds	Total
1981	73.0	50.0	23.0	0	0	16.7	0	16.7
1982	27.0	10.0	17.0	0	0	16.9	0	16.9
1983	25.0	10.0	15.0	0	3.3[c]	15.0	2.9	17.9
1984	25.0	0	25.0	25.5[d]	4.6	40.4	3.7	44.1
1985	25.0	0	25.0	135.0[e]	31.8	102.5	28.2	130.7
1986	22.5	0	22.5	0	6.4	85.3	6.3	91.6
1987	70.0	50.0	20.0	0	2.0	28.3	2.0	30.3
1988	25.0	0	25.0	6.6[f]	42.5	34.7	42.5	77.2
1989	25.0	0	25.0	0	18.8	29.2	18.6	47.8
1990	25.0	0	25.0	0	27.7	25.2	27.2	52.4

NOTE: Since fiscal year 1984, IDA funds were available until expended. Consequently, in some years, obligations may exceed the resources shown. Borrowed funds were only available for the year in which they were borrowed. OFDA obligations include mission allotments but do not include IDA funds administered by AID Bureaus for reconstruction or non-IDA funds obligated by the missions for disaster assistance.

[a]Unearmarked IDA funds are the difference between the annual IDA appropriation and country earmarks. Country earmarks were administered by AID Bureaus. However, the Unearmarked IDA column includes an earmark for children who have become orphans as a result of natural disasters. These earmarked funds were administered by OFDA in 1988, 1989, and 1990, and were $1, $0.5, and $0.5 million, respectively.

[b]These include only IDA special appropriations for this period, which were administered by OFDA.

[c]This figure does not include $11.3 million that was borrowed by OFDA but administered by AID's Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean.

[d]This figure includes $16 million for relief efforts in Africa, $2 million for Afghan refugees, and $7.5 million for Miskito Indians in Honduras.

[e]Congress appropriated $137.5 million, but $2.5 million was transferred to the Africa Bureau for operating expenses.

[f]This figure was from a supplemental appropriation for the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference states, of which $6.6 million was administered by OFDA.

Source: Records from AID's Office of Financial Management and OFDA.

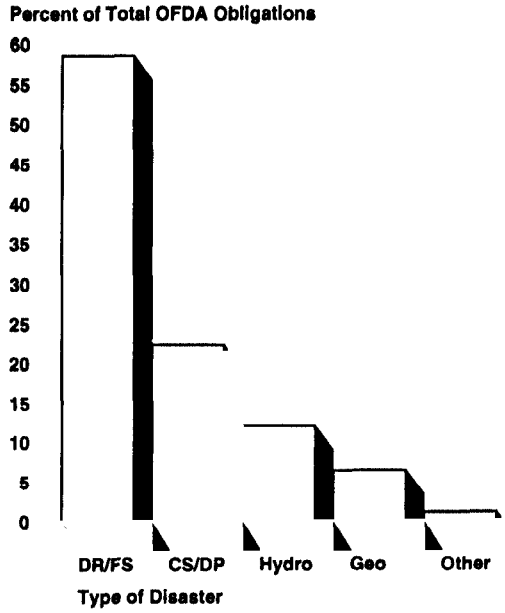
From 1981 through 1990, the borrowing authority, and to a lesser extent the special appropriations, buttressed OFDA's responses to disasters. In

several years, obligations were double the unearmarked IDA appropriation. OFDA exercised its borrowing authority every year since 1983, averaging $17.1 million annually. This enabled OFDA to respond to disaster needs beyond the annual IDA appropriation level. However, in 1988, 1989, and 1990, OFDA borrowed larger amounts because its need for additional funds grew, but no special IDA appropriations were made available. During these years, OFDA obligated almost as much in borrowed funds as in IDA funds.

Long-Term Disaster Responses Led to Increased Funding Needs

OFDA's need for additional funds was caused, in part, by its involvement in costly, long-term disasters. Disasters such as drought, food shortages, civil strife, and displaced persons, typically require longer term OFDA involvement and greater financial outlays. For example, OFDA's responses to recurring drought, displaced persons, and civil strife disasters in Sudan from 1985 through 1990 totaled more than $100 million. Figure 3.1 shows the percentage of OFDA resources spent on five disaster categories from 1981 to 1990. Long-term disasters, depicted in the first two categories, consumed almost 80 percent of OFDA's resources during this period. Conversely, OFDA resources spent on quick-onset disasters were about 20 percent of OFDA's total obligations, well within OFDA's average annual appropriation.

Figure 3.1: Distribution of Costs by Type of Disaster From 1981 Through 1990



DR/FS - drought, food shortages, famine, infestations

CS/DP - civil strife, displaced persons, expellees, emergencies

Hydro - hurricanes, cyclones, typhoons, floods, storms

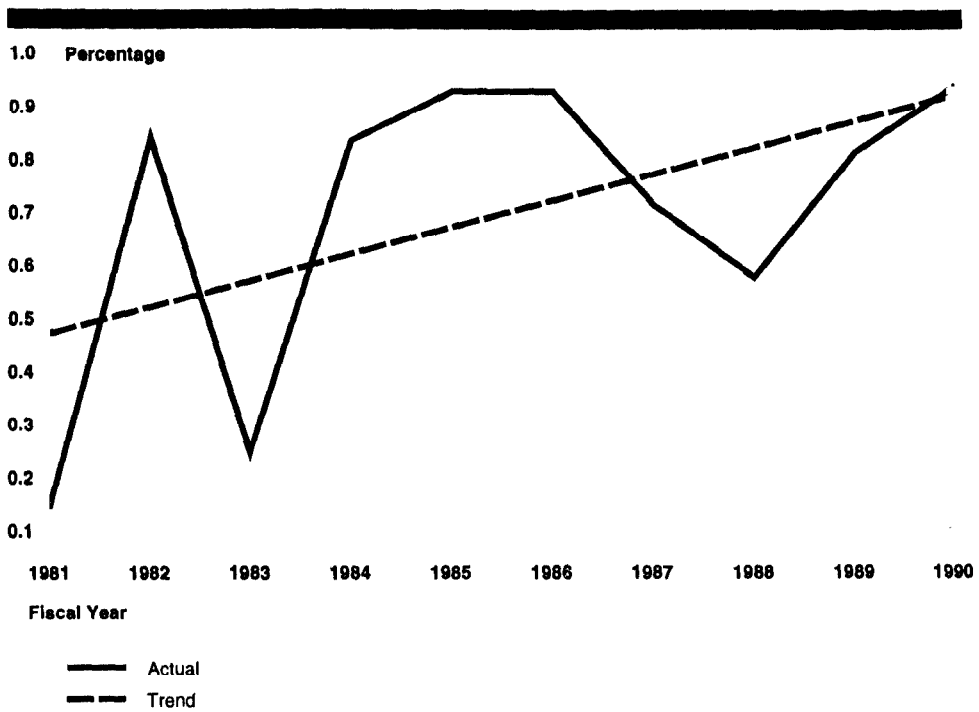
Geo - earthquakes, landslides, volcanic eruptions, and tsunamis

Other - accidents, epidemics, fires

Source: Data from OFDA's Commodity/Services Reports.

Over the decade, OFDA's obligations for long-term disasters increased. Figure 3.2 shows the percentage of OFDA obligations for long-term disasters in fiscal years 1981 through 1990 and a statistical regression depicting a general upward trend over the decade.

Figure 3.2: Percentage of OFDA Obligations for Long-Term Disasters, Actual and Trend (1981-90)



Source: Data from OFDA's Commodity/Services Reports.

In addition, OFDA responded to a larger number of disasters as the decade progressed. From 1981 to 1985, OFDA responded to 196 declared disasters, while from 1986 to 1990, it responded to 274.

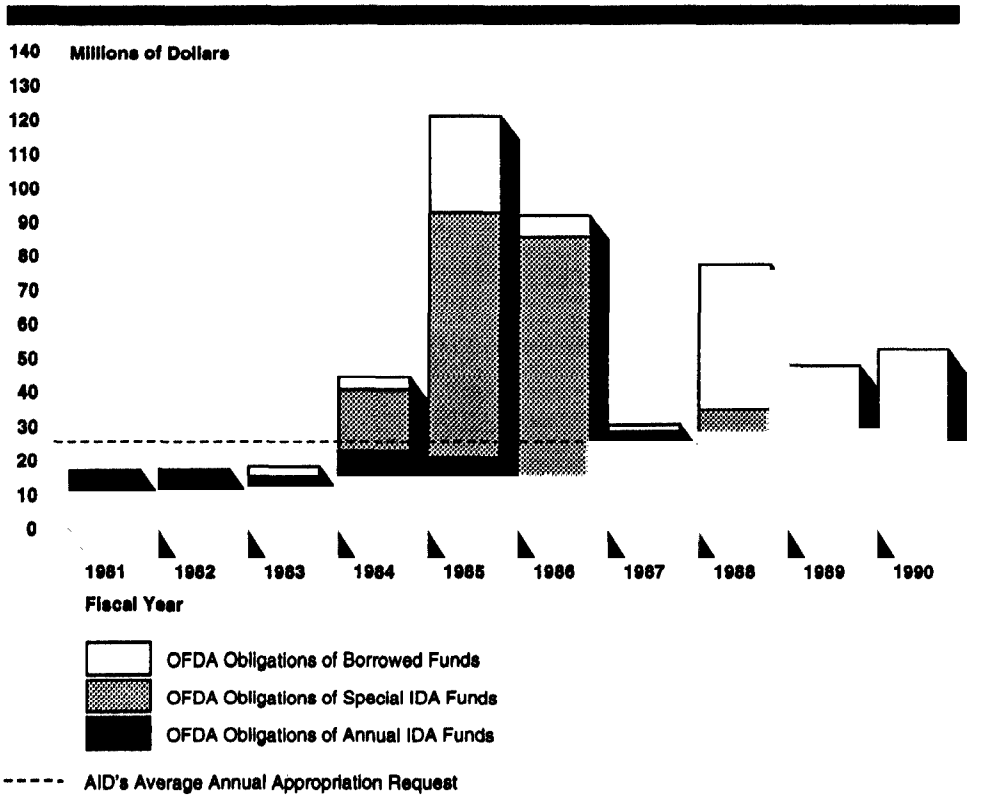
Consistent Borrowing Alters Congressional Budget Priorities and Creates Friction

AID did not request sufficient funds to meet OFDA's increased needs from 1984 through 1990. As a result, AID's increased reliance on borrowing authority has precluded budget transparency and created bureaucratic friction.

From 1981 to 1990 AID's annual requests for disaster assistance did not reflect OFDA's increased role in long-term disasters and the increasing number of disasters to which it was responding. AID's annual OFDA requests averaged $25.2 million and annual appropriations (unearmarked IDA funds) averaged $22.3 million. For the decade, OFDA's obligations averaged $52.6 million annually. OFDA officials told us that they had submitted budget requests to AID above $25 million on several occasions, but AID management did not agree that OFDA needed a larger appropriation since it

could rely on borrowing authority. Figure 3.3 compares AID's average annual OFDA budget request with OFDA's annual obligations.

Figure 3.3: OFDA's Obligations From 1981 Through 1990 Compared With AID's Average Annual Appropriation Request



Note: In 1988, OFDA's obligations of special IDA funds include $6.6 million from a supplemental appropriation for development activities in Southern Africa.

Source: Records from AID's Office of Financial Management and OFDA.

Officials from the Office of Management and Budget stated that, in their opinion, OFDA's use of borrowing authority was an appropriate method for funding disaster assistance. They argued that long-term disasters, which have been the primary reason OFDA has borrowed development funds, should be the institutional concern of AID's bureaus and missions and, therefore, should be at least partly supported by these development funds. According to these officials, an annual appropriation of about $25 million was generally sufficient for OFDA's responses to sudden-onset disasters. They added that the borrowing process also provided the Office of Management and Budget the opportunity to review OFDA's justifications for

additional funds and monitor OFDA's spending pace. They stated that monitoring the IDA account was important to minimize the need for supplemental appropriations because OFDA can spend large amounts over a short time period without the long-term program planning and budgeting required for most AID spending.

Borrowing as an Alternative to Budgeting for Disaster Assistance Concerns Congress

House and Senate Appropriations Committee Reports from 1989 to 1992 criticized AID for regularly relying on borrowing authority rather than requesting a realistic budget for OFDA. According to the reports, AID's reliance on borrowing authority resulted in the alteration of congressional development priorities. However, some AID officials maintained that borrowing had a minimal effect on development programs because OFDA usually borrowed funds that were available for deobligation. AID has a large pipeline of obligated but unspent funds (about $9.2 billion as of the end of fiscal year 1991). However, according to an official from AID's Africa Bureau, the deobligated funds transferred to OFDA could have been reprogrammed within the bureau for other development projects.

We believe that consistently relying on borrowing authority alters congressional priorities because it shifts funds Congress intended to be used for development assistance over to disaster assistance programs. Although AID has a large pipeline of obligated but unspent funds, Congress intended that those funds be spent for development. In 1991, we reported on this pipeline and made recommendations for AID to act more quickly to deobligate the funds so they could be available for other purposes.[1] In addition, as OFDA's role in long-term disasters has increased, AID has not clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of OFDA and the regional bureaus and missions in responding to these costly disasters. Instead, AID officials have relied on borrowing rather than clarifying roles and developing a budget that accurately reflects OFDA's role in long-term disasters.

Borrowing Is Cumbersome and Creates Friction

The bureaucratic procedures required to borrow funds are cumbersome, time-consuming, and create friction among OFDA, AID's budget office, and AID regional bureaus. These bureaucratic entities, each with its own agenda, must approve the process. OFDA officials stated that they had to provide detailed written justification for each borrowing request, and although disaster needs were usually pressing, OFDA had to wait from

[1] Foreign Assistance: Funds Obligated Remain Unspent for Years (GAO/NSIAD-91-123, Apr. 9, 1991).

several weeks to several months before the funds were actually available for obligation.

Officials from the Africa Bureau, which has provided the majority of borrowed funds, expressed frustration about the labor-intensive process of identifying available funds, completing paperwork for their transfer to OFDA, and not knowing how OFDA eventually spent them. AID budget and bureau officials said that one reason the process was slow was that AID lacked confidence in OFDA's financial management system, which did not provide timely obligation information. They believed that OFDA requested additional funds before it had a clear need for them. OFDA officials stated that they tried to request funds as soon as their need to borrow became clear because they knew the process would take a long time. OFDA officials have recognized the need to improve their financial management system and have recently taken steps to address its weaknesses. Both AID and Office of Management and Budget officials have found OFDA's credibility improved because of these changes.

OFDA's Borrowing Has Continued in 1991 and 1992, Despite Increased Appropriations

Although AID requested and received larger appropriations for fiscal years 1991 and 1992, OFDA still relied on its borrowing authority. AID requested and Congress appropriated $40 million for OFDA in fiscal year 1991. AID justified this increase on the basis of the rising number of disasters (including those caused by civil strife) and the desire to avoid disruption to other AID programs. Congress also provided a special appropriation in 1991 of $67 million, partly in response to the Persian Gulf crisis. However, even with the higher funding level, OFDA borrowed $19 million. In fiscal year 1992, AID requested $40 million, and Congress increased OFDA's annual appropriation to $69 million. OFDA officials said they believed the increase was warranted given the number of disasters they had responded to in recent years and the funding requirements of long-term disasters. As of September 1992, OFDA had borrowed $39.2 million in fiscal year 1992, mostly for responses to long-term disasters in Africa, including the drought in Southern Africa and civil strife in Somalia.

Conclusions

During the last decade, OFDA's responsibilities expanded, particularly for long-term disasters, without a corresponding increase in budget requests and annual appropriations. Without the borrowing authority or special appropriations, OFDA would not have had the resources to respond to long-term disasters and the increased number of disasters overall. Borrowing authority is a necessary mechanism that allowed OFDA to

respond to disaster assistance needs. However, in the latter half of the decade AID used borrowing authority in lieu of proposing an accurate budget for OFDA. Budget requests could be based on an annually updated trend analysis combined with forecasts or projections of unusual needs. Long-term disasters, since they permit at least a degree of longer range planning, could be accounted for in the projections.

A realistic OFDA budget would restore budget transparency, reduce the friction and time spent on borrowing authority, and reflect the roles of OFDA and AID regional bureaus for long-term disasters. OFDA would then need to resort to the borrowing authority only when a large unanticipated emergency requires OFDA's exceptional authorities.

Recommendation

We recommend that the Administrator of AID develop and submit realistic disaster relief budget requests that reflect the agency's best estimates of funding needs for the period involved.

Disaster and Development Assistance Are Not Fully Integrated

Ideally, disaster assistance and development activities should be integrated to ensure the most effective use of resources, but for a number of reasons, AID has not fully integrated these efforts, especially for long-term disaster responses. Long-term disaster responses fall into a gray area between OFDA's traditional short-term emergency responses and AID missions' longer term reconstruction and development activities. AID policy does not specifically define how OFDA and the missions should share responsibility for these disaster responses. With respect to Africa, various circumstances (including the establishment of the Development Fund for Africa and the enactment of appropriations' restrictions) have further clouded the issue of responsibility for long-term disasters and resulted in OFDA's assuming an increased role there. Clearer AID policies and additional efforts to improve linkages between OFDA and AID development programs could improve the effectiveness of AID's disaster response.

Integration of Disaster Assistance and Development Programs Is Unclear

AID officials acknowledge that disaster assistance activities should support recovery and long-term development. For example, seeds and tools could be provided along with food aid to permit displaced persons to grow their own food when possible. Conversely, if food aid is provided over an extended period to a population that could grow its own food, disaster assistance could undermine long-term self-sufficiency. In addition, development programs could be designed to address the root causes of disasters when possible. For example, in drought-prone countries, development programs could focus on food security, markets, and the infrastructure needed to transport food to vulnerable areas. Finally, well-conceived development programs can help minimize those factors that exacerbate disasters, such as rising populations in vulnerable areas or environmental degradation.

AID's Structure Does Not Promote Integration

A 1978 National Research Council study recommended that AID consider the development of stronger linkages between OFDA's disaster assistance program and the broader development programs at AID. Although efforts have been made to improve such linkages, structural and operational differences between OFDA and AID regional bureaus continue to impede the full integration of their activities. OFDA and the regional bureaus each have their own mandate and priorities. OFDA strives to provide humanitarian assistance to whomever is in need, while AID bureaus work toward improving a country's overall economic potential. OFDA usually operates quickly, with relatively few restrictions on its decisions and expenditures, whereas AID regional bureaus and missions work under longer term

planning cycles. Also, an AID official told us that there was a natural friction between regional bureaus and central programs such as OFDA. This is caused by disagreements over the control and influence each unit has over program planning and decisions.

OFDA and an AID mission has asked AID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation to fund an evaluation of how disaster relief could be better integrated with development activities. However, an official from the Center responsible for monitoring OFDA's programs said this evaluation was not a top priority and would probably not be conducted.

PMP Programs Can Also Be Better Integrated

A 1990 OFDA-sponsored study of OFDA's PMP activities found that these activities could also be better integrated with development programs.[1] It suggested creating an interagency coordinating mechanism chaired by OFDA. The study also suggested that AID include PMP concerns in its long-term development plans for selected countries. In November 1991, OFDA proposed a new AID PMP strategy focusing on the use of scarce resources in hazard-prone countries. The strategy suggests a better integration of PMP concerns into the programming of AID assistance in the most disaster-prone countries. It recognizes that many AID development programs were having an impact on disaster prevention and mitigation but that the impact could be strengthened with a more deliberate focus. As of August 1992, this strategy paper was still under discussion at AID. AID officials said the delay was caused, in part, by a lack of understanding of PMP and who should be responsible, the fear that the proposed activities would result in more work for the overseas missions, and disagreement between OFDA and the regional bureaus over some of the proposed mitigation activities. Africa Bureau officials told us that they believed mitigation activities were best planned and managed by the regional bureaus because they should be part of a larger sustainable development strategy.

AID's Policy for Who Is to Deliver Assistance for Long-term Disasters Is Unclear

Since it was created, OFDA has always provided some assistance for longer term ongoing disasters. However, AID officials told us that during the mid-1980s OFDA's role in responding to these disasters changed, especially for African countries experiencing civil strife. Historically, they said, OFDA provided short- and medium-term relief and rehabilitation assistance (approximately 60 to 90 days) in support of AID missions' efforts, and the

[1]The study, Strategic Planning Evaluation Study of OFDA Non-Relief Activities, was completed by Management Systems International in February 1990.

missions provided the longer term reconstruction and development programming. However, AID officials said that during the African famine of the mid-1980s, OFDA became more operational and began providing assistance in certain countries for longer periods of time. In some cases, this assistance has continued for a number of years. Thus, OFDA's expenditures for long-term disasters increased over the 1980s.

A combination of factors contributed to this change. The Development Fund for Africa, established in 1987, requires the Africa Bureau to concentrate its resources on selected African countries where the governments are committed to development policies that will promote equitable and sustainable economic growth. Some of the long-term disasters in Africa occurred in countries that did not meet these criteria, due to ongoing civil strife and faulty economic policies. In addition, some of the costly long-term disasters occurred in countries where development assistance was prohibited by restrictions on the expenditure of appropriated funds.[2] In countries where there was no well-established AID development program or where development programs were prohibited, OFDA filled the void by providing ongoing relief and rehabilitation assistance. For example, in 1990, OFDA spent almost $27 million, or over half its obligations for that year, in Angola, Sudan, Liberia, and Ethiopia—all countries where development assistance was prohibited at the time by appropriations' restrictions.

OFDA's increased role evolved in the absence of a clear AID policy determination. Ongoing disaster assistance falls into a gray area between OFDA's traditional short-term disaster responses and the missions' longer term reconstruction and development activities. AID's international disaster assistance policy (dated May 1985) and the agency's regulations found in Handbook 8 do not specifically address the respective responsibilities of OFDA and the regional bureaus and missions in responding to long-term disasters, especially those occurring where there is no well-established development program. This lack of definition has created uncertainty about who is in charge and has resulted in friction between the Africa Bureau and OFDA.

Over 2 years ago OFDA proposed a new policy on disaster assistance. Since then the proposed policy has been under discussion within AID, and as of

[2]For example, section 513 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 1991 prohibits the use of funds appropriated under that act for countries whose duly elected government is deposed by military coup or decree. Section 518 of the act prohibits the use of funds for countries in default for over 1 year on loan payments for programs funded under the act.

August 1992, no time frame had been set for resolving disputed issues. However, even the proposed policy does not specifically address who is responsible for assistance during long-term disasters. AID officials told us that the policy had not been finalized because of disagreements between OFDA and the bureaus and because top management at the agency had not intervened to resolve the conflict. A new Assistant Administrator for the Africa Bureau was appointed in July 1992, and the Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance told us that he is hopeful that relations between the two bureaus would improve as a result of the new appointment. The need for stronger top-management leadership on matters such as this was recently highlighted in a report by the President's Commission on the Management of AID Programs, which stated that AID management problems "have evolved over a period of years and are attributable to the lack of strong and consistent leadership from the Administrator's office."[3]

OFDA's Role Has Been Debated

In the absence of a clear AID policy, OFDA's increasing role in funding and managing long-term disaster assistance and the proper use of disaster and development funds for long-term disaster responses have been debated and discussed by officials from AID, the Office of Management and Budget, and Congress. Technically, disaster assistance funds are designated for use by AID, and AID could allocate the funds and assign responsibility for managing long-term disaster responses to either OFDA or the regional bureaus. In addition, in some cases, disaster response activities have been funded by development funds. For example, the AID mission in Haiti reprogrammed development funds to support relief activities in response to civil strife.

Office of Management and Budget officials told us they believed long-term, ongoing disasters should be managed by the AID regional bureaus and missions because the assistance is longer term in nature and the regional bureaus and missions have the responsibility and expertise to address the root causes of the problems, especially when the disasters result from failed development or economic policies. They believe OFDA's long-term disaster responses should be funded with a combination of IDA funds and funds borrowed from development accounts.

[3]The President's Commission on the Management of AID Programs, Report to the President - - An Action Plan (Apr. 16, 1992).

A key Africa Bureau official told us that the clear mandate under the Development Fund for Africa prevents using development funds for disaster assistance. He said long-term disaster responses should be funded primarily with IDA funds and OFDA should be responsible for planning and funding long-term disaster responses, because OFDA staff have the unique skills and experience required to respond to disasters. Disaster assistance often requires making speedy decisions on the basis of incomplete information in highly politicized situations.

OFDA managers said the use of disaster assistance funds for long-term disasters and OFDA's management of those responses was consistent with OFDA's mandate because it afforded an opportunity to reduce mass suffering and save lives. Since experts can predict food shortages resulting from drought and civil strife, OFDA can intervene to ensure that food and medical supplies reach large numbers of the needy before their lives are at risk. In addition, OFDA managers agree that disaster responses require unique skills and experience that their staff, rather than AID mission staff, are expected to have.

Congress, through earmarked appropriations for disasters such as famine in Africa, has clearly signaled its intent that IDA funds be used for long-term disasters. However, in 1989, the Senate Appropriations Committee expressed concern that "AID has failed to distinguish clearly between disaster relief and the long-term needs of developing nations" and was using disaster assistance as a substitute for intensive social, environmental, and agricultural planning and rehabilitation.[4] It stated that chronic and recurring crises should be incorporated into regional development strategies and instructed AID to reexamine its disaster relief policy.

In August 1992 the head of AID's Directorate for Policy said she believes there should be a new disaster assistance policy, and she plans to focus more attention on finalizing it.

AID Transferred Responsibility for Two Programs in Africa

In June 1992, AID transferred responsibility for managing the missions or programs in two disaster-stricken countries (Sudan and Somalia) from the Africa Bureau to the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance, which includes OFDA. In both countries, development programs were prohibited by appropriations' restrictions, but large portions of the countries' populations required emergency humanitarian assistance. Due to

[4]Report 101-131 from the Senate Committee on Appropriations regarding the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill, September 14, 1989.

conditions in those countries, Africa Bureau officials came to the conclusion that neither country met the criteria for assistance through the Development Fund for Africa. Furthermore, by that time most of the activities operating in both countries were OFDA-funded humanitarian disaster assistance programs, and the Africa Bureau believed it could no longer afford to adequately support the existing Sudan mission. (The mission in Somalia had already been closed due to the civil war there.) AID documents state that one objective of the transfer was to provide the managers who have responsibility for resources (in this case, the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance and its food and disaster assistance resources) with authority over the day-to-day decisions affecting those resources.

This transfer decision was controversial within AID. Officials from AID's Policy Directorate and Africa Bureau said they opposed the transfer of responsibility because the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance would be acting as another regional bureau, and it provided only a short-term solution to the larger question of responsibility for long-term disasters. The transfer also triggered a debate and friction over the reallocation of staff positions and operating expense funds from the Africa Bureau to the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance. An Africa Bureau official said the bureau and OFDA should work more closely together in the future to resolve similar problems and the Africa Bureau should retain responsibility for managing the mission. Others expressed concern (and we share this concern) that the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance and OFDA would become bogged down in the day-to-day operations of the missions and lose the ability to respond quickly to sudden-onset disasters. According to AID officials, OFDA's strength has been its quick response capacity, rather than its long-term planning and management skills.

Conditions for Return to Regional Bureau Control Are Not Clear

The AID memorandum assigning the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance responsibility for managing some missions also specifies that responsibility may be transferred back to the regional bureau when development objectives again become the priority. However, the point at which OFDA should phase out and reconstruction and development should begin is not clear. In Mozambique, OFDA provided large amounts of disaster assistance for 6 years beginning in 1984. A new AID development program was also begun in fiscal year 1984, but the program was small and the mission had only two or three AID staff. In 1989, OFDA questioned whether it should continue to fund long-term disaster assistance there. Although the

civil strife emergency was continuing, the needed assistance could be anticipated and planned on a longer term basis. For example, seeds for food crops were needed annually as groups of people were displaced, but the need was predictable.

After some discussion, the Africa Bureau somewhat reluctantly agreed to fund the majority of the existing disaster relief and rehabilitation programs in Mozambique in addition to its development programs. AID officials said that the bureau was reluctant because the mission was understaffed and it was not clear at the time whether it was appropriate to fund relief and rehabilitation activities using funds appropriated for the Development Fund for Africa. Under the agreement, OFDA continued to fund those aspects of the program that were not predictable or were clearly emergency responses. Mission officials said that their newly funded programs included an increased recovery and development emphasis. However, Mozambique continues in a state of civil strife, and some PVO officials there said they saw little difference between the programs formerly funded by OFDA and those currently funded through development resources.

Conclusions

Disaster assistance, PMP activities, and development assistance could be planned and implemented to complement each other. However, structural and operational differences between OFDA and AID regional bureaus and unclear responsibilities for long-term disaster responses have impeded the activities' integration. The lack of clearly defined responsibility for long-term disaster assistance has led to friction and disagreements between OFDA and the Africa Bureau, further reducing the likelihood that disaster assistance and development activities intended to address the root causes of the disaster will be integrated. As a result, AID cannot ensure that it is providing the most efficient and effective responses to the disasters or development programs in disaster-prone countries. While AID has had new policy options on disaster assistance under consideration for more than 2 years, it has not yet reached decisions and issued clear policy guidance on long-term disaster responses.

Recommendations

We recommend that the AID Administrator (1) direct AID officials to conduct an evaluation of how AID can better integrate disaster assistance and country development programs and (2) finalize and implement an updated agency policy on linking longer term development activities with the delivery of disaster assistance. We recommend that this policy

specifically discuss responsibility for long-term disasters and include provisions for direct linkages between the regional bureaus and the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance in planning and implementing PMP, disaster assistance, and development activities.

OFDA Makes a Good-Faith Effort to Provide Impartial Assistance

According to AID policy, OFDA provides disaster assistance when, among other reasons, it is in the interest of the United States to do so. The Department of State and, in some instances, the National Security Council provide foreign policy guidance to AID in carrying out disaster relief activities. OFDA and other top-level AID officials stated that it is almost always in the interest of the United States to provide disaster assistance and that as a general policy, OFDA provides disaster assistance to those most in need, regardless of (1) the political alliances of the needy persons or their government and (2) the relative political importance of the country to the United States. Despite this general policy, OFDA is sometimes pressured or directed by other organizations within the executive branch or by congressional members with regard to the timing and/or level of disaster assistance to be provided. Nonetheless, we found that OFDA has made a good-faith effort to provide assistance equitably and without regard to political affiliation, even when the disaster is caused by civil strife and the environment is politically charged.

OFDA's Policy Is to Provide Evenhanded Assistance

The Foreign Assistance Act requires OFDA to provide assistance to those most in need, to the greatest extent possible. It is OFDA's policy to provide humanitarian assistance, regardless of the political orientation of the stricken country or its relationship with the United States. When responding to civil strife disasters, OFDA guidance recommends channeling assistance through voluntary agencies or international organizations that are nonpolitical and respected by both sides in a conflict. Also, the guidance advises making every effort to provide assistance to victims on both sides of the conflict.

Disaster Assistance Can Be Politically Sensitive

Disaster assistance, however, inherently has a U.S. foreign policy component. It can convey a message of concern from the American people and help maintain stability by providing needed support and relief during crises. The ambassador in a stricken country must declare a disaster in the affected country before OFDA can provide assistance, and Department of State guidance indicates that the United States can provide emergency relief assistance consistent with U.S. foreign policy goals.

Most officials we talked to said that it was almost always in the interests of the United States to provide disaster assistance, because of the positive effects of demonstrating U.S. humanitarian support. However, an OFDA official said that in some cases ambassadors might be reluctant to declare disasters if the declaration would reflect poorly on the government in the

affected country, such as when disasters are caused by civil unrest. In addition, in some cases ambassadors may choose not to declare a disaster because the government of the stricken country does not want assistance from the United States, either because of poor relations between the two countries or the stricken country's desire to assert its self-reliance and independence from outside assistance.

OFDA's involvement in ongoing civil strife and famine has increased, and assistance in these conditions can be politically sensitive. Famine emergencies need not result from drought unless there are accompanying manmade complications, such as civil strife or failed agricultural policies. It is often challenging to provide assistance to both sides of a conflict due to the inherent mistrust between the warring factions. Emergency relief may influence where displaced populations stay and when they return home and can thus be used to strengthen or show support for one faction or another. Food has, on occasion, fallen into the hands of combatant forces despite efforts to prevent this. Also, because OFDA relies on the notwithstanding clause to provide relief in countries where regular development assistance is prohibited by appropriations' restrictions or where the United States has no diplomatic relations, OFDA's program may help maintain a U.S. presence where it would otherwise be minimal. For example, as of September 1992, the United States did not yet recognize the government in Angola, yet it had a disaster assistance effort there that was the highest profile program operated from the U.S. Liaison Office.

Disaster Relief Policy Has Changed Since the Mid-1980s

The African drought and famine of the early and mid-1980s forced U.S. decisionmakers to contend with the foreign policy aspects of providing food aid and emergency assistance to Ethiopia and Mozambique—two countries with Marxist-Leninist governments. Diplomatic relations with these countries were strained at the time, and numerous U.S. agencies were involved in the policy debate, including AID, the Department of State, the Office of Management and Budget, and the National Security Council. Later evaluations of the famine relief efforts found that, initially, the U.S. position on aid was often dependent on the political orientation and status of the recipient African governments. U.S. decisionmakers were reluctant to address the problems in the politically sensitive countries with Marxist-Leninist governments. In the early stages, the U.S. response was delayed or insufficient because of concerns over obtaining credible needs assessments and adequate controls to ensure that the food reached the intended recipients. However, after widely viewed media coverage that resulted in increased public pressure, extensive policy debate within the

executive branch, and the receipt of better needs assessments, the agencies agreed to respond on the basis of need without regard to politics. The United States provided more drought and famine relief assistance to Ethiopia than any other government or international organization.

Certain U.N.-coordinated relief efforts in the late 1980s and early 1990s helped more clearly articulate the principles of nonpolitical humanitarian assistance that have served as a guide for the international community. In 1989, the United Nations, donor governments, and PVOs launched Operation Lifeline Sudan in response to the ravages of drought combined with civil conflict in Sudan. It established the following principles for donors and relief agencies:

- impartiality and the provision of relief solely on the basis of need;
- maintenance of a neutral stance, the avoidance of choosing sides in a conflict, and the promotion of access for all needy civilian noncombatants;
- maintenance of an open dialogue and the sharing of information on relief activities with all parties;
- accountability for relief provided; and
- corridors of tranquility designed to ensure the safe passage of relief supplies.

OFDA officials played a decisive role in advocating and negotiating the terms of Operation Lifeline. Other similar programs were developed in countries such as Angola. There have been many problems providing assistance under these terms in countries at war. Relief convoys have been bombed and fired upon, governments have periodically suspended the programs, and food has fallen into the hands of the military. However, the basic principles have provided the foundation for continued negotiation and discussion among opposing factions. These principles are similar to the original mandate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which provides impartial assistance in most extended conflict situations.

Foreign Policy Factors May Play a Role in Disaster Assistance

OFDA sometimes receives pressure or direction from Congress and/or from within the executive branch about the timing and extent of assistance to be provided. In most cases, according to OFDA officials, this pressure is meant to encourage additional assistance for favored nations or ethnic groups rather than to block needed assistance for unfriendly nations. For example, Congress earmarked large amounts of assistance following earthquakes in El Salvador and Armenia. These funds were primarily for longer term reconstruction and were administered by AID's regional bureaus. Individual

congressmen have requested that OFDA consider increasing relief efforts to specific Caribbean islands after hurricane damage. Also, in fiscal year 1984, Congress provided a special IDA appropriation of $7.5 million for humanitarian aid for Miskito Indians who, because of their opposition to the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, were then living in Honduras. In this case, a disaster declaration was not made by the U.S. Ambassador in Honduras, and OFDA allotted the disaster assistance funds to the AID mission that provided the assistance to the Indians.

In the case of the Kurds who fled Iraq following the Persian Gulf War, OFDA officials told us that, due to foreign policy considerations, they were not permitted to develop a contingency plan for a post-hostility relief effort for Iraq until the Kurds began fleeing Iraq in 1991. They stated that even after the mass exodus began, a response was delayed until after the Secretary of State had visited the Kurdish refugee camps and personally authorized the assistance. We were told that the National Security Council made the initial decisions on how the relief effort to the republics of the former Soviet Union during the winter of 1991-92 would be administered. OFDA officials said that occasionally ambassadors have declared disasters and requested assistance to demonstrate U.S. support for governments in disaster-stricken countries, but OFDA staff determined that U.S. assistance at the requested level was not warranted by the severity of the disaster. The officials said they tried to base the level of their response on the needs of the stricken community and OFDA's experience with similar disasters rather than on the requests of the ambassador.

OFDA Tries to Provide Assistance Fairly

It is difficult to determine whether disaster assistance is provided impartially. Ideally, assistance should be based on an accurate needs assessment, but it can be extremely challenging to conduct complete and thorough needs assessments in disaster situations. This is especially true for civil strife disasters, in which logistical and security constraints hinder mobility and circumstances constantly change. Also, OFDA does not have clear criteria to guide the level and type of response that should be provided for various disasters. Instead, it reacts to demands and needs as disasters develop.

We found during our fieldwork and in discussions with numerous relief officials that OFDA made a good-faith effort to provide disaster assistance fairly to those in need and advocated fairness within the U.S. government and the United Nations. A high-level U.N. Children's Fund official told us that OFDA's leadership provided a moral imperative for evenhanded

assistance in politically sensitive relief efforts, such as those in Sudan and Somalia.

We were told of only two instances in which officials agreed that U.S. assistance was not provided for political reasons because disasters occurred in countries that did not have positive relations with the United States. One involved a flood in Yemen during the late 1980s; the administration opposed declaring a disaster. Another involved an emergency in Nicaragua as a result of storm damage from Hurricane Joan in 1988 when the Sandinista government was in power. OFDA officials said that they advocated providing disaster assistance there, but the ambassador did not declare a disaster. In some other instances in which the stricken country had strained relations with the United States, such as Iran, OFDA has donated relief assistance through the United Nations.

Aid to Angola Has Reached Both Sides of the Conflict

Aid to Angola has been highly politicized. OFDA's ability to be evenhanded was initially suspect because of U.S. political ties and past covert aid to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (known by its Portuguese acronym, UNITA). In 1990, large numbers of Angolans were threatened by imminent starvation and disease resulting from civil war and several years of drought. The United Nations launched an appeal for assistance for persons in government-held areas, and the OFDA Director requested that efforts be made to assist drought victims on both sides of the conflict. After some initial resistance from the government of Angola and discussions with a high-level U.N. delegation, the United Nations launched the Special Relief Program for Angola in November 1990. The plan set out agreements between the government and UNITA on mechanisms for delivering emergency relief assistance to people in need on both sides, including cross-border deliveries of relief to Angolans living in the southern portion of the country. The United States participated in formulating this operations plan, and OFDA officials attended discussions between the warring factions.

OFDA has consistently supported the Special Relief Program for Angola, including both the first phase and a recent phase two. OFDA funded and encouraged PVOs under the Special Relief Program for Angola umbrella to provide assistance in government-held areas and remote areas held by UNITA, negotiated with the government of Namibia to open cross-border operations, and contributed significantly to the Special Relief Program for Angola appeals for assistance from the U.N. Children's Fund, the U.N. Development Program, and the World Food Program. U.N. Development

Program funds were used for coordination and support of the overall Special Relief Program for Angola.

OFDA funded the delivery of significant amounts of emergency food aid and provided other assistance to southern Angola, including the largely inaccessible southeastern Cuando Cubango province, a base of operations for UNITA. Costs for assistance to southern Angola were much higher than assistance to other parts of the country due to the remoteness of the region and the need to airlift food over a portion of the supply route. However, both UNITA and government areas benefitted from this cross-border operation, and OFDA funded extensive PVO programs in other government-held areas of the country. Also, Angolan and Namibian government officials and U.N. officials told us that at the time of our visit in March and April 1992, U.S. assistance was viewed as evenhanded and responsive to the needs of both sides of the conflict and had fostered the perception that the United States is an honest broker in the peace process. They attributed this, in part, to the efforts of U.S. officials in Namibia and the OFDA Emergency Coordinator, who promoted open lines of communication and the discussion of problems.

Civil War Undermines Effective Relief Efforts

Despite saving lives and alleviating the suffering of many, AID's disaster assistance efforts cannot fully resolve the crises created by ongoing civil strife. In the absence of peace, disaster assistance is only a stop-gap measure, and affected countries cannot fully recover and benefit from reconstruction and development programs. For full recovery, diplomatic efforts must accompany disaster assistance. In addition, security concerns in civil strife situations often impede or restrict the delivery of relief supplies to those most in need. Relief officials in Mozambique told us that, without peace, the disaster assistance efforts there could be only marginally successful. Similarly, in Angola, relief officials attributed progress in the disaster relief effort to the cease-fire there.

In Somalia, the deaths of tens of thousands; the flight of hundreds of thousands of refugees into Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, and elsewhere; and the threat of starvation for millions are stark evidence of the international community's failure, to date, to solve the crisis. Despite the assistance provided since the crisis escalated in early 1991 when then-President Siad Barre fled the capital, the U.S. efforts have been insufficient to alleviate eath and suffering there. From October 1990 through mid-August 1992, the United States provided $86 million in cash and commodities for Somalia, including 120,000 metric tons of food commodities, $19.5 million

from the State Department's Bureau for Refugee Programs, and $12.8 million in OFDA contributions.[1] In addition, on August 14, 1992, AID pledged another 105,000 metric tons of food aid and on August 16, President Bush announced an additional 145,000 metric tons of food aid for Somalia. Also in August 1992, the United States began airlifting large volumes of food aid and other relief supplies into Somalia using Department of Defense resources. OFDA officials stated that this effort was critical to the effort to save lives there.

OFDA's Director told us that the magnitude of the Somalian crisis exceeded AID's capability to adequately respond. He also said that while OFDA has been active in Somalia since the beginning of the current crisis, emergency assistance programs alone will not solve it. Diplomatic efforts are also required to establish a secure environment in which emergency relief supplies can be distributed to those in need.

[1]These figures do not include additional amounts provided or pledged by the Bureau for Refugee Programs for Africa-wide programs, a substantial portion of which was to be used to support programs for Somali refugees.

OFDA Responses to Declared Disasters (1989 and 1990)

Country	Disaster	Amount[a]
Fiscal year 1989		
Angola	Displaced Persons	$237,280
Argentina	Emergency	10,000
Bangladesh	Storm	0[b]
Benin	Epidemic	20,170
Bolivia	Epidemic	81,450
Burma	Fire	25,000
Burma	Fire	9,876
Cape Verde	Infestation	18,913
Caribbean[c]	Hurricane	1,902,166
China	Earthquake	25,000
China	Floods	25,000
Comoros	Epidemic	4,673
Costa Rica	Hurricane	85,000
Djibouti	Floods	39,852
Ethiopia	Epidemic	258,500
Gabon	Floods	25,000
Gambia	Infestation	25,000
Gambia	Expellees	25,000
Ghana	Floods	25,000
Guinea Bissau	Fire	10,000
Haiti	Civil Strife	25,000
Indonesia	Earthquake	51,880
Indonesia	Floods	25,000
Jordan	Infestation	107,501
Korea	Floods	42,000
Lebanon	Civil Strife	500,000
Malawi	Floods	312,441
Mali	Floods	25,000
Mauritania	Infestation	751,440
Mauritania	Expellees	50,000
Morocco	Infestation	313,305
Mozambique	Civil Strife	4,661,738
Nigeria	Epidemic	11,588
Peru	Floods	25,000
Philippines	Floods	25,000
Philippines	Floods	275,000
Philippines	Typhoon	275,000
Philippines	Typhoon	225,000
Senegal	Infestation	2,255,220
Senegal	Expellees	175,000

(continued)

Country	Disaster	Amount[a]
Somalia	Civil Strife	930,175
South Africa	Food Shortage	500,000
Soviet Union	Accident	125,243
Soviet Union	Earthquake	1,888,259
Sri Lanka	Floods	525,000
Sudan	Civil Strife/ Displaced Persor	18,284,646
Sudan	Infestation	41,864
Thailand	Floods	592,908
Togo	Drought	25,000
Togo	Epidemic	25,000
Uganda	Drought	75,000
Western Samoa	Cyclones	25,000
Fiscal year 1990		
Algeria	Earthquake	92,953
Angola	Drought	4,188,402
Bolivia	Drought	624,259
Burma	Fires	15,700
China	Floods	25,000
Colombia	Emergency	5,000
Cote D'Ivoire	Displaced Persons	25,000
El Salvador	Civil Strife	555,689
Ethiopia	Drought	9,870,773
Grenada	Fire	25,000
Guinea	Displaced Persons	275,000
India	Cyclones	25,000
Indonesia	Floods	25,000
Indonesia	Volcanic Eruption	25,000
Iran	Earthquake	658,585
Jordan	Displaced Persons	404,125
Korea	Floods	25,000
Lebanon	Civil Strife	451,306
Liberia	Displaced Persons	1,787,507
Madagascar	Cyclone	20,000
Mexico	Floods	25,000
Mozambique	Civil Strife	2,328,460
Nicaragua	Floods	25,500
Panama	Emergency	6,844,324
Paraguay	Floods	25,000
Peru	Earthquake	25,000
Philippines	Earthquake	495,705
Philippines	Typhoon	50,000
Philippines	Emergency	25,000

(continued)

Country	Disaster	Amount[a]
Philippines	Floods	25,000
Romania	Civil Strife	813,091
Rwanda	Food Shortage	25,000
Sierra Leone	Displaced Persons	25,000
Somalia	Civil Strife	0[d]
South Africa	Civil Strife	500,000
Sri Lanka	Civil Strife	525,000
Sri Lanka	Displaced Persons	162,045
Sudan	Civil Strife/ Displaced Persons	11,115,207
Tanzania	Floods	24,990
Thailand	Typhoon	225,000
Tonga	Cyclone	15,000
Trinidad-Tobago	Emergency	25,000
Tunisia	Floods	369,884
Turkey	Accident	5,000
Turkey	Displaced Persons	25,000
Turkey	Floods	9,993
Tuvalu	Cyclone	15,000
Uganda	Epidemic	13,164
Western Samoa	Cyclone	306,606
Yugoslavia	Accident	10,000
Yugoslavia	Accident	10,000
Zaire	Floods	25,000

[a]These figures may not reflect additional costs for a disaster that were incurred the following year.

[b]OFDA did not incur any costs for this disaster because the AID Mission donated surplus commodities supplied by OFDA in 1988 for a flood disaster.

[c]OFDA provided assistance to the islands of Antigua, Dominica, Montserrat, Tortola, and St. Kitts and Nevis as a result of Hurricane Hugo. We visited Antigua, Barbados, Montserrat, and St. Kitts in connection with OFDA's response to this disaster.

[d]OFDA did not incur any costs for this disaster because AID's Food for Peace and the State Department's Refugee Programs provided food and other assistance to Somalia in 1990. An OFDA plane in Ethiopia was used to transport relief personnel but was paid for by the State Department's Refugee Programs.

Source: OFDA Annual Reports, 1989 and 1990.

Profile of Angola

Background

Angola is located in southwestern Africa, bounded by Namibia to the south, Zambia to the east, Zaire to the north, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. It is a country of 8.5 million people and is nearly twice the size of Texas.

From the mid-1970s until recently, Angola was a setting for U.S.-Soviet rivalry. With the help of Cuban troops and Soviet advisors, the Marxist-oriented Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola took power after the departure of the Portuguese colonial government in 1975. The United States had been giving covert assistance to two other groups. One of these, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola, was essentially eliminated as a fighting force. The other, the National Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), retreated into the remote southeastern region of the country and began waging 16 years of war to topple the government. UNITA received significant support from South Africa throughout this period.

In the aftermath of the Vietnam experience, the United States was reluctant to support opposition movements in Third World countries. With the 1976 Clark Amendment, Congress banned further assistance to any Angolan faction without specific congressional approval. In 1985, the Clark Amendment was repealed and subsequently, in 1986, U.S. government officials acknowledged that a covert aid program to UNITA had begun.

In 1988, a regional agreement mediated by U.S. diplomats was accepted by Cuba, Angola, and South Africa. This agreement provided for an end to South African and Cuban involvement in Angola, as well as a South African withdrawal from neighboring Namibia. However, the fighting between the government forces and UNITA continued.

Finally, following 16 years of civil war, an official cease-fire went into effect in Angola. On May 31, 1991, Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos and Jonas Savimbi, leader of UNITA, signed a peace agreement. The peace accord, facilitated by the United States, the former Soviet Union, Portugal, and the United Nations, calls for the establishment of (1) a unified armed force, (2) a multiparty system, (3) a market economy, and (4) free elections to be held in the fall of 1992. On June 10, 1990, the United States established a liaison office in Luanda, Angola. The liaison officer serves as an observer in the Joint Political Military Commission, which is monitoring the peace agreement. Stated U.S. policy is to withhold diplomatic relations with Angola until a new government emerges from free and fair multiparty elections.

Angola is a country of great natural wealth, which offers development promise if the peace accord is successfully implemented. However, many additional obstacles exist that must be addressed. Some of these include the distrust between the Government of the Peoples Republic of Angola and UNITA, the effects of 16 years of war, and the current drought devastating the southeast region of the country.

The Emergency Situation

The 16-year civil conflict in Angola had a devastating effect on the country. In 1991 Angola had one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world. Estimates of displaced persons as of late 1991 included about 480,000 refugees in neighboring countries, 760,000 internally displaced civilians, and about 250,000 demobilized soldiers and their families, who have gathered in 48 assembly areas throughout the country. Some Angolan refugees in neighboring countries have chosen to return home following the cease-fire and more may choose to return in the very near future.

A 4-year old drought in southeastern Angola, combined with breakdowns in farming and transportation due to the devastating effects of 16 years of civil war, placed an estimated 1.9 million people in need of emergency assistance, according to the United Nations.

Land mine problems continue to represent a serious threat to the population in Angola. Angola's estimated 20,000 amputees are reportedly the largest such population in the world. It is feared that there may be several layers of mines still under the earth, and as of April 1992, there was no broad plan of action for their removal and no existing capacity to carry out such a plan.

The Emergency Response

The United States began providing food aid to Angola under the auspices of the World Food Program in 1981. Disaster assistance in response to the late-1980s drought began in 1989, when OFDA funded an airlift of seeds, blankets, and other emergency supplies at the request of the International Committee of the Red Cross. OFDA assistance grew sharply, rising to $13 million in 1991. OFDA has provided assistance through the United Nations and through U.S. private voluntary organizations, such as CARE, Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, Africare, and the International Medical Corps. This assistance has included grants in support of a number of relief projects, such as supplementary feeding programs, the distribution of seeds and tools for displaced persons, orphan assistance, and immunization programs. OFDA has funded programs in areas under

government control and areas under UNITA control, and the agency has funded a contractor to oversee the disaster assistance program.

In support of the Angolan peace accords, which include elections scheduled for the fall of 1992, U.S. sanctions against providing development assistance to Angola were lifted in February 1992. President Bush authorized up to $1.5 million of Economic Support Funds and up to $13 million from the Development Fund for Africa for programs in Angola. As of June 1992, AID's Africa Bureau was working on plans to provide funding to PVOs to conduct rehabilitation and democratization programs.

In November 1990, the United Nations launched its Special Relief Program for Angola and began relief operations in provinces severely affected by drought and war-related famine, including areas controlled by UNITA. From its inception, this first phase was problematic. Plagued by mistrust between the government of Angola and UNITA, the program suffered under severe operational constraints. The negotiations leading to the opening of relief corridors were long and difficult. The authorized convoys faced logistical problems, including searches by UNITA forces and long delays at checkpoints. In December 1990, following an attack on a bridge used by relief convoys and military vehicles, the government of Angola suspended the Relief Program. With the persuasion of the international community, the Relief Program resumed operations in March 1991. However, donor support lagged and the program was never able to fully recover from the suspension.

In December 1991, the United Nations began a follow-on Special Relief Program, which will run through December 1992 and focus on stabilizing and returning displaced persons, refugees, and other vulnerable groups to productive society. U.N. agencies, including the U.N. Development Program, the U.N. Children's Fund, and the World Food Program provide assistance under the auspices of the Special Relief Program. Although the United States is a significant financial contributor to the Program and various other bilateral donors and the European Community provide relief and food to Angola, U.N. officials said that donor support for the follow-on program has been disappointing.

Profile of Mozambique

Background

Mozambique is located on the southeastern coast of Africa and is bounded by Tanzania on the north, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe on the west, and Swaziland and South Africa to the south. The population of Mozambique was estimated at 14.1 million in 1986.

The mass exodus of the Portuguese following independence in 1975 left Mozambique with a bankrupt, colonial economy and an administrative structure in chaos. The ruling party initially followed a development strategy based upon Marxist-Leninist ideological principles. This strategy resulted in a steep economic decline, which only now is being reversed with the aid of an economic program supported by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in the world, with per capita income of less than $150 per year.

A continuing armed insurgency remains Mozambique's main obstacle to economic development. Since independence, a band of anti-government guerrillas called the Mozambique National Resistance or Renamo has waged a war of attrition on the people and the government of Mozambique. Renamo initially received support from Ian Smith's Rhodesia during the late 1970s, when Mozambique supported groups attempting to overthrow his white-minority government. Later, the government of South Africa supported Renamo, in response to the Mozambique government's support of the African National Congress. Then, in 1984, the governments of Mozambique and South Africa signed a mutual nonaggression treaty, the Nkomati Accord, agreeing not to support opposition movements in each other's country.

The Nkomati Accords, however, have had minimal impact on stopping Renamo's campaign of terror against civilian populations. A State Department commissioned investigation concluded that over 100,000 Mozambicans had been killed by Renamo during a 2-year period in the late 1980s. According to a U.N. Children's Fund report, over 88,000 children under the age of 5 died of starvation or disease in 1988. OFDA reporting in more recent years indicates that the suffering continues.

In 1990, after years of being unsuccessful at defeating Renamo, the Mozambique government agreed to hold peace talks with guerrillas. Some observers are skeptical that Renamo will be able to guarantee a cease-fire among all of the guerilla units and bandits throughout the country. As of September 1992, the peace talks are still ongoing.

Given Mozambique's strategic location and enormous natural resources, long-range development is possible. However, this requires an end to armed conflict, which has lasted more than a decade.

The Emergency Situation

Random Renamo guerilla attacks on villages and relief convoys continue throughout Mozambique. An estimated 2 million Mozambicans are listed as being internally displaced, seeking food, water, and safe refuge. An additional population of greater than 2 million are estimated to be living in rural areas and unable to grow enough food because of the chronic drought and frequent Renamo attacks. Also, it is estimated that more than 1 million Mozambicans have sought refuge in neighboring countries and, as peace talks progress, large numbers may begin to return home. In 1992, about two-thirds of Mozambique's farmland, primarily in the southern and central portions of the country, was affected by a severe drought. The drought, combined with the civil war, has created an emergency scenario of grave proportions.

The United Nations estimates that 3.1 million Mozambicans will need food aid in 1992, 1.2 million more than in the previous year. Officials from the International Committee of the Red Cross told us that large numbers of people are fleeing Renamo-controlled areas in very bad physical shape. Children are especially vulnerable. These officials estimate 500,000 to 1 million people are at risk of starving.

During our work in Mozambique, we met with displaced persons who had recently reached government-secured villages. They recounted stories of abuses at the hands of Renamo and told us that most people in the countryside were reduced to foraging for food for survival. We observed about 50 new arrivals in a village in Zambezia province clothed by garments made from tree bark. We expect this situation to worsen and the number of persons dependent on relief to increase because of the drought.

The Emergency Response

The United States has provided emergency assistance to Mozambique since 1984. Since that time, OFDA has funded various PVOs, such as World Vision, CARE, AirServ, Africare, Food for the Hungry International, Save the Children, and Adventist Development and Relief Agency. The PVOs have provided relief and rehabilitation assistance, including emergency food airlifts, programs for traumatized children, primary health care, and seed distribution.

In 1990, OFDA transferred funding of several relief and rehabilitation projects to AID's Development Fund for Africa account because the projects had become less emergency oriented and more involved in providing longer term rehabilitation assistance to Mozambique. The projects have been managed by the AID mission in Mozambique, which developed an overall PVO support project. In 1992, U.S. emergency and development assistance to Mozambique totaled approximately $200 million, making Mozambique AID's largest program in sub-Saharan Africa. The major portion of this assistance is food aid targeted to provide humanitarian assistance to the millions displaced and affected by war and chronic drought, while also encouraging a policy environment that will support market-based growth. OFDA has continued to fund emergency programs. In 1992, OFDA funded a $2 million airlift feeding program designed to respond to the emergency needs of severely malnourished displaced persons.

At the time of our fieldwork, the mission in Mozambique was relying on pipelined Title II food aid to respond to Mozambique's drought-induced food requirements. No additional requests for food shipments had yet been forwarded to Washington, despite the known lag time in receiving food aid commodities and the demands the southern Africa drought as a whole was likely to place on the region's transportation system. Since our visit, three PVOs have submitted requests to OFDA for funding for emergency food aid programs.

In addition to assistance from the U.S. government, substantial assistance is provided by the international community and approximately 160 nongovernmental organizations.

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