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TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 10 STATE 116623

PASS TO USAID/DIRECTORS/REPS, AMEMBASSY DCMS
PASS TO MISSION DISASTER RELIEF OFFICERS
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH, ROME FOR USUN ROME, NEW YORK
FOR DMERCADO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: REF, SOCI, EAID

SUBJECT: USAID/DCHA Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster
Assistance's Guidance for Disaster Planning and Response
- FY 2009

REF: ADS 251

1. This is an action cable. Please see paragraph 5.
2. Summary: This cable provides guidance to all posts concerning support from USAID/DCHA's office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) before, during, and after the occurrence of natural and complex disasters abroad in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009. USAID/OFDA's mission, capabilities, and support capacities in coordinating and managing U.S. Government (USG) assistance in response to disasters are also outlined. Procedures highlight the need for both continuous USAID/OFDA and USAID mission collaboration in the planning process for disasters as well as regular and sustained communication between Mission Disaster Relief Officers (MDROs) and USAID/OFDA Regional Advisors and Coordinators to ensure timely, appropriate, and effective USG emergency assistance. The guidance provided in this cable should be used in conjunction with Automated Directives System (ADS) 251 on international disaster assistance. Posts are encouraged to contact USAID/OFDA Regional Advisors in the field and Regional Coordinators in Washington, DC, for additional information, guidance, and clarifications. This cable has also been cleared by State F and State M/PRI. End summary.

USAID/OFDA's Mission

3. USAID/OFDA, within the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), is responsible for providing international disaster assistance and coordinating the USG response to declared disasters in foreign countries. USAID/OFDA's mission is to minimize and, where possible, prevent loss of life, alleviate human suffering, and reduce damage to economic assets in disaster-affected countries. Through support for programs in disaster mitigation, preparedness, and training, USAID/OFDA seeks to address the underlying hazards and vulnerabilities that create disaster risks and exacerbate impacts. (Note: USAID/OFDA's responsibility and authority are specified in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, sections 491-493. End note.)

Designation and Role of an MDRO

4. The Mission Disaster Relief Officer (MDRO) is appointed by the Chief of Mission (CoM) and is the focal point at post for disaster-related information, planning, and activities affecting the host country. In posts that have a USAID Mission, the CoM often delegates the responsibility for selecting the MDRO and the alternate MDRO to the USAID Mission Director. The MDRO is a regular member of the post's Emergency Action Committee (EAC) and is responsible for preparing and maintaining Annex J of the Emergency Action Plan (EAP), entitled Assistance to Host Country in a Major Accident or Disaster, and ensuring that post personnel are familiar with its contents. This section of the EAP is also referred to as the Mission Disaster Relief Plan (MDRP). The template for Annex J of the Emergency Action Plan or the MDRP can be downloaded from the State Department intranet at <http://arpsdir.a.state.gov/fam/12fah01.html>. If the MDRO is not routinely included in EAC meetings, OFDA encourages the MDRO to brief the EAC at least once a year on the status of Annex J of the EAP. The EAC needs to know who the MDRO is and that the MDRO is the focal point for issues related to the host population. In addition, the MDRO should be familiar with host government disaster authorities and other potential humanitarian partners and continually liaise with the USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor, as well as staff at post from the Department of Defense (DOD) and/or the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM), to ensure the free flow of information related to evolving disaster situations. An

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alternate MDRO assists and replaces the MDRO during periods of absence. USAID/OFDA recommends that the alternate MDRO be a Foreign Service National (FSN) to provide consistency and continuity.

5. It is essential that USAID/OFDA have the most current contact information on file for MDROs and alternates to facilitate a rapid USG response to a declared disaster. Posts should provide updated contact information for MDROs and alternates, including names, titles, tour end dates, contact numbers (office phone, home phone, cellular phone, and fax), and e-mail addresses to USAID/OFDA Mission Disaster Preparedness Coordinator Christine Leonardo by cable or by e-mail at cleonardo@usaid.gov. If your post has provided updated contact information in the past four months, please disregard this request.

When a Disaster Occurs

6. First steps: The MDRO should undertake several actions when a disaster occurs. First, the MDRO needs to verify the scope and magnitude of the event and the humanitarian consequences through established information contacts and networks, including host government officials, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), U.N. and international organization (IO) representatives, Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, other embassies, and donors. The MDRO should immediately notify the CoM, who will approve the disaster declaration cable (see paragraph 8). In some cases, depending on the nature of the disaster, the post's EAC will be convened. The MDRO's initial point of contact for response options should be USAID/OFDA's Regional Advisor(s) in the affected region to ensure effective communication flow and coordination (contact information in paragraph 19).

7. Issuing a disaster alert cable: If it appears likely that USG assistance may be necessary and appropriate, the MDRO should draft a disaster alert cable to USAID/OFDA, time permitting, providing background and current situation information regarding the disaster event and post's anticipated course of action. This cable should be sent even if post has no immediate plans to request disaster assistance from USAID/OFDA (see paragraph 9). The addressee on the caption line of all field cables must be "DCHA/OFDA", for internal USAID routing purposes, and information provided in disaster alert cables should be unclassified.

8. Issuing a disaster declaration cable: While a disaster alert cable is not required (though strongly encouraged), a disaster declaration cable is necessary for USAID/OFDA to provide humanitarian assistance. In the event of a rapid-onset disaster that does not allow sufficient time for both a disaster alert and disaster declaration cable, only a disaster declaration cable is needed. To request assistance from USAID/OFDA in the

disaster declaration cable, the U.S. Ambassador or Charge d'Affaires (Charge) must determine that the disaster satisfies the following criteria: 1) the disaster is of such magnitude that it is beyond the host country's ability to respond adequately; 2) the host country desires or will accept USG assistance; and 3) it is in the interest of the USG to provide assistance. This determination should be made in consultation with USAID/OFDA Regional Advisors. For countries without an official U.S. diplomatic presence, the Assistant Secretary of State for the appropriate region may declare a disaster via a memorandum from the State Department to the Director of USAID/OFDA. Important: when issuing the disaster declaration cable, posts should also email and/or fax a copy of the cable to USAID/OFDA in Washington to ensure that the cable is received.

9. Information to include in the disaster declaration cable: The cable from post requesting USAID/OFDA's assistance needs to describe the disaster event and to provide the following information: 1) the extent to which the host country needs assistance to respond adequately to the disaster; 2) whether the host government has requested or will accept USG assistance; and 3) the intended use of requested resources, including recommended organization(s) through which funds will be channeled. Other requested information includes

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estimated numbers of people killed, injured, affected, and displaced/homeless; immediate humanitarian needs; such disaster background information as geographic location and damage to infrastructure, crops, and livestock; other donor efforts/contributions; and additional information from available assessment reports as appropriate.

10. Disaster assistance request: The U.S. Ambassador or Charge can request up to USD 50,000 for immediate disaster relief from USAID/OFDA. The disaster declaration cable must provide a clear description of the intended use and prospective recipients of the response funds. Post should award funds within 24 hours, but not later than 72 hours, after receipt of the USAID/OFDA response cable. USAID/OFDA's regional and/or Washington office will coordinate with the MDRO to assist in the determination of appropriate response options. USAID/OFDA funds are to be used for immediate disaster relief or rehabilitation, not for long-term reconstruction. Relief assistance is provided to save lives, reduce human suffering, and alleviate the economic impact of disasters, and should generally be designated for existing humanitarian relief-implementing organizations rather than for host nation government ministries. Disaster rehabilitation includes intermediate-term activities to assist disaster-stricken

populations in their efforts to return to self-sufficiency. USAID/OFDA will consider the relief phase completed within 60 days after the onset of a sudden disaster event, unless post requests and USAID/OFDA approves a continuation of the initial response period. However, USAID/OFDA assistance may be provided for as long as the disaster requires emergency humanitarian assistance. Relief assistance for ongoing disasters, such as drought and civil strife, requires a redeclaration cable at the beginning of each new USG fiscal year (October 1). Post needs to consider whether a renewal of a disaster declaration in a new fiscal year is required.

11. The MDRO should notify the chief of the consular section as soon as possible after a disaster occurs, since the consular section is responsible for ascertaining the welfare of American citizens who may be affected by the disaster and for warning Americans not to travel to the disaster zone. The MDRO should notify the consular section of any American casualties known to have resulted from the disaster and should advise Americans encountered in the disaster area to contact the consular section, which frequently receives "welfare and whereabouts" queries from concerned family members after a disaster has occurred.

12. Other significant actions by the MDRO: In addition to the above actions, the MDRO should start a log of significant events and provide regular, numbered situation report cables to USAID/OFDA that update and expand on the initial disaster declaration cable. The MDRO should maintain regular contact with relevant organizations, including host government officials, USAID/OFDA Regional Advisors, DOD officials, State/PRM staff, NGOs, IOs, U.N. agencies, and other donors; assemble the EAC, if necessary; gather preliminary assessments of funding, commodity, and other operational requirements, including logistics and transport; and identify potential relief channels. The MDRO should also keep the embassy's public affairs officer advised of both the scope of the disaster and the details of the mission's response. The public affairs officer acts as the embassy spokesperson, and is responsible for all official communications to the media, including press releases.

How USAID/OFDA May Assist the MDRO

13. Capabilities: In addition to releasing up to USD 50,000 of disaster assistance funds, USAID/OFDA has several other capacities for providing disaster assistance, including the deployment of USAID/OFDA Regional Advisors, an assessment team, or a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART); provision of relief commodities from USAID/OFDA stockpiles; and additional disaster funding of NGO, IO, and U.N. emergency assistance proposals or appeals. The decision to use

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these additional capacities is based on the magnitude of the disaster and the host country's own response capacities. These additional capabilities are described below:

A. Regional Advisors: In addition to providing pre-disaster guidance, USAID/OFDA Regional Advisors also assist in donor coordination and liaison, assessments, monitoring and reporting, logistics for relief commodities, communications with USAID/OFDA in Washington, and other aspects of post's relief effort. (Note: a disaster declaration is not required for the deployment of regional advisors. End note.)

B. Assessment team: The assessment team provides USAID/OFDA in Washington and post with information and recommendations to make timely decisions regarding the USG disaster response. USAID/OFDA's assessment teams are typically composed of sector specialists (such as experts in health, nutrition, agriculture, water and sanitation, shelter, geo-hazards, logistics, protection, and disaster management), as well as supervisory staff familiar with USAID/OFDA policies and procedures. (Note: a disaster declaration is not required for USAID/OFDA to deploy an assessment team. End note.)

C. Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART): USAID/OFDA's Director, with the concurrence of the U.S. Ambassador or acting CoM in the affected country, may deploy a DART, based on the magnitude and severity of the disaster. A DART is a team of disaster specialists who deploy to assist a post or posts in managing the USG response to a disaster. A DART will expedite USAID/OFDA's response, gather information and report on the disaster situation, assess the effectiveness of the overall humanitarian response (including USG-funded relief activities), identify unmet humanitarian needs, advise the mission on disaster issues, and manage USG field relief activities. The DART structure is flexible in size and composition but normally provides such core functions as management, planning, logistics, operations, and administrative capacities, and, in certain circumstances, contracting capacity, in addition to sector specialists. The DART provides information and programming support, including regular reporting on humanitarian conditions and other risks facing affected populations, liaising with the relief community, reviewing proposals, and recommending funding. If USAID anticipates the need for DOD assistance, DART staff may include USAID liaison officers who can coordinate with DOD counterparts to assess how military capabilities might be employed most efficiently. USAID/OFDA may request post's assistance, when necessary, in arranging for the importation and licensing of vehicles and

communications and computer equipment used by the DART (such as global positioning systems, hand-held radios, satellite phones, high frequency radios, laptop computers, and/or digital cameras). Radio frequencies for the U.S. embassy, NGOs, U.N. agencies, and local government offices may also be requested by DART personnel. A DART might also request administrative and consular support from post.

D. USAID/OFDA relief commodities: USAID/OFDA may provide disaster relief commodities (such as blankets, plastic sheeting, and water containers) from USAID/OFDA's various worldwide stockpiles when appropriate. USAID/OFDA can contract transportation services via sealift or land transport. USAID/OFDA may also fund air transport of emergency commodities when urgent delivery is required. Commodity shipment requests must identify, by name, the responsible consignee and in-country point of contact, including telephone and fax numbers. Post should also affirm that arrangements for the distribution of commodities have been secured. Requests for USAID/OFDA assistance should indicate any limitations on the size and capacity of the receiving airport, seaport, and/or warehouse, including the availability of discharge labor and facilities. Requests should also indicate whether uniformed service personnel and/or other DOD staff are authorized to travel in-country, as USAID/OFDA may use DOD to assist with the transport of emergency relief commodities when, for example, commercial alternatives are unavailable or when unique military capabilities can expedite relief efforts during urgent, life-saving situations. USAID/OFDA may request post's assistance, when necessary, in arranging for customs

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E. NGO/IO/U.N. funding: USAID/OFDA provides funding to NGOs and IOs to implement emergency program assistance for disaster response activities. NGOs do not have to be U.S.-based, nor do they have to be registered as private voluntary organizations (PVOs) with USAID, to be eligible to receive international disaster assistance funding. USAID/OFDA solicits post's knowledge and experience with the NGO community before reaching a funding decision. USAID/OFDA may support local Red Cross/Red Crescent societies through grants to the American Red Cross and/or, in consultation with State/PRM, the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (ICRC) and/or the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Please note that both ICRC and IFRC have been designated by USAID as international organizations (IOs) for grant-making purposes. Alternatively, posts may use USAID/OFDA funds provided in a mission fund citation to enter into a direct agreement with local Red Cross/Red Crescent societies.

F. Posts are encouraged to review NGO proposals and IO or U.N. appeals and provide recommendations.

Specifically, posts should review NGO proposals to ensure that they are prepared according to USAID/OFDA's grant proposals and reporting guidelines (available at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/) and include all requested information. If a USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor or other USAID/OFDA field representative is working with post on the disaster response, the Regional Advisor's prior clearance or comments normally should be obtained. The mission-endorsed proposal is reviewed by USAID/OFDA in Washington and shared with the appropriate USAID geographic bureau, as necessary, before the funding activity is approved.

G. In reviewing grant proposals, posts should be mindful of USAID Acquisition and Assistance Policy Directive (AAPD) 02-04 (now incorporated into chapters 302 and 303 of the ADS), which refers to U.S. executive orders and laws that prohibit transactions with organizations associated with terrorism and which requires inclusion of certain specified language in all USAID contracts and assistance instruments. These clauses state that it is the legal responsibility of the contractor or assistance recipient to ensure compliance with these executive orders and laws. In addition, posts should also be mindful that AAPD 04-14 requires all NGO recipients of USAID assistance to certify that they do not provide material support and resources to terrorists or for terrorist acts.

H. In executing a grant to an NGO, USAID/OFDA can provide a mission fund citation if the mission has local contracting or grant authority, or USAID/Washington can contract directly with the NGO's headquarters. (Note: when providing funds to a post, the commitment is recorded at USAID/Washington and post is required to forward the obligating document to USAID/OFDA. The failure to provide the obligating document may result in the de-obligation of the funds. End note.) USAID/OFDA will monitor and evaluate the performance of USAID/OFDA-funded relief efforts in accordance with USAID/OFDA's guidelines.

I. Section 2110 of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Tsunami Relief, 2005, provides that none of the funds under the heading International Disaster Assistance (IDA) may be obligated to an organization that fails to adopt a code of conduct that provides for the protection of beneficiaries of assistance under such heading from sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian relief operations. This provision applies to funds obligated for FY 2005 and for subsequent fiscal years. To this end, the following language should be included in all IDA-funded awards: "Code of conduct for the protection of beneficiaries of assistance from sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian relief operations:

-- as a condition for this award, it is understood by USAID and affirmed by the recipient that the recipient has adopted a code of conduct for the protection of

beneficiaries of assistance from sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian relief operations. Such code of

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conduct must be consistent with the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) task force on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian crises, which includes the following core principles:

-- sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment;

-- sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense;

-- exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading, or exploitative behavior is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries;

-- sexual relationships between humanitarian workers and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work;

-- where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same humanitarian aid agency or not, s/he must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms; and

-- humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment."

USAID/OFDA Sector-Specific Assistance

14. USAID/OFDA seeks to apply a "protection mindset" to its planning, assessments, strategies, monitoring, and evaluation of assistance programs. At a minimum, the goal is to ensure that assistance programs "do no harm." In some situations, well designed and implemented assistance programs can mitigate or prevent such protection problems as violence, abuse, theft, harassment, discrimination, or exploitation of vulnerable individuals. USAID/OFDA-funded protection initiatives

should be adapted to the context of the disaster and incorporated within USAID/OFDA's main response sectors. USAID/OFDA may provide assistance, in addition to performing or supporting assessments, in but not limited to the following sectors:

A. Shelter: USAID/OFDA can provide emergency shelter supplies or support the local purchase of shelter materials, if needed. When and where possible (and subject to "buy America" requirements), USAID/OFDA promotes the use of local materials and labor, which often results in locally acceptable emergency shelter solutions and needed employment generation. In addition, USAID/OFDA promotes shelter solutions that mitigate the effects of such natural hazards as earthquakes or floods. USAID/OFDA shelter responses might include support of host/guest family arrangements, provision of materials to support minimal repairs to damaged/destroyed housing, or support of transitional solutions that link relief and reconstruction, thereby "jump-starting" the longer-term process of incremental shelter development. Because USAID/OFDA does not encourage the establishment of tent camps for public-health, environmental, social, and economic reasons, tents will be provided only in rare circumstances, and primarily as part of non-camp shelter responses.

B. Water: USAID/OFDA recognizes the critical role water quality and quantity play in the health and survival of affected populations. USAID/OFDA may fund such activities as the provision of potable water through well and spring development, water treatment (at point of source and point of use), well rehabilitation, rainwater collection, extension of existing water systems, and support to community operation and maintenance

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SUBJECT: USAID/DCHA Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance's Guidance for Disaster Planning and Response - FY 20 organizations. USAID/OFDA can also provide 10-liter collapsible water containers, large-capacity water bladders, and portable water purification units. Hygiene education in relation to the prevention of waterborne diseases is also supported.

C. Sanitation and hygiene: USAID/OFDA recognizes the importance of addressing sanitation and hygiene issues during an emergency. To that effect, USAID/OFDA may fund activities related to the provision of sanitation facilities and the promotion of sound hygiene practices in conjunction with water supply interventions. USAID/OFDA can fund such activities as latrine construction, solid waste management, and hygiene promotion.

D. Health: USAID/OFDA generally provides funding for primary health programs that address treatment, as well as health promotion and disease prevention of acute

disease conditions. These interventions can include immunization campaigns and the restarting of routine vaccination programs, treatment and surveillance of communicable diseases, oral rehydration therapy (ORT), training of health care workers, and emergency obstetric care. Medical supplies and essential drugs needed to support the emergency health programs will be funded if they come from USAID-approved sources. USAID/OFDA also funds the rehabilitation of clinics damaged by emergencies but will generally not fund the reconstruction of hospitals.

E. Nutrition: USAID/OFDA funds emergency nutrition programs, including supplementary feeding programs (SFP) and community-based therapeutic care (CTC), in order to address acute malnutrition, measured by weight for height. USAID/OFDA also supports the international or local purchase, as appropriate, of nutritional products needed in the treatment of severely malnourished populations. Furthermore, USAID/OFDA will support nutritional surveys and surveillance programs and the training of health staff in the management of malnutrition.

F. Food: The USG's food donation programs are administered by USAID's Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA/FAS). Information about these programs is available at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/ffp/ and <http://www.fas.usda.gov/>. USAID/OFDA normally does not provide direct emergency food aid. However, in situations where there is no USAID/FFP food aid in the pipeline and the situation is dire, USAID/OFDA may provide funds to posts to purchase emergency food supplies locally, subject to "buy America" requirements, and/or fund emergency internal purchase programs for a limited duration until other sources are identified. Additionally, consistent with the current food security initiative, USAID/OFDA uses IDA funds for the local purchase of food in emergencies. USAID/OFDA may also purchase blended foods for supplementary or therapeutic feeding programs.

G. Agriculture and livestock: USAID/OFDA can support the distribution of seeds and tools to subsistence farmers through a variety of mechanisms, depending on the type of disaster. Seed programs should be tailored to the situation. For example, seed fair and voucher programs may be most appropriate when market access is an issue, while lack of available seed may be addressed through programs that directly distribute procured seed to farmers. USAID/OFDA may also consider funding emergency destocking, animal health programs, or feeding of livestock in prolonged drought situations, but will not fund animal restocking as an emergency response.

H. Economic recovery: Both natural and human-caused disasters can severely disrupt the economic and livelihood systems in the affected area, by damaging or

destroying one or more of the systems' parts, including productive assets, local skills and capacities, transport and markets, social networks, and information dissemination and sharing. The third leg of USAID/OFDA's mandate is to help mitigate the economic impact of disasters. There are many types of activities that can bolster or kick-start local economies and repair livelihoods. Such initiatives should be undertaken based

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on a comprehensive understanding of the pre-disaster local economic structure and function, be highly participatory, rely on local skills and capacities, and minimize damage to the natural environment.

I. Other: USAID/OFDA can support a wide range of humanitarian activities, including technical assistance support for donor coordination units; urban search-and-rescue efforts; projects that support livelihoods; chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) assessment and response, depending on the scope of the disaster; and food monitoring and surveillance. USAID/OFDA encourages missions to promote donor coordination and host government coordination groups where none exist. USAID/OFDA will co-finance emergency programs with other donors when needed.

J. Other (continued): USAID/OFDA recognizes the importance of identifying and addressing the needs of populations most at risk. Most vulnerable populations can include women, children, older people, disabled people, people living with HIV/AIDS, and displaced people. Depending on the particular context, a person's ethnic origin, religion, or other distinguishing characteristic may increase his/her vulnerability to potentially dangerous circumstances. When and where possible, USAID/OFDA should identify the nature and characteristics of the most vulnerable populations; determine their needs and capacities; limit the harmful mechanisms in which these groups are forced to engage; include populations most at risk in important decision-making processes, thus empowering these groups in support of their own protection; and help avoid programming and implementation aspects that may aggravate the situation on the ground, thus increasing the population's vulnerabilities and risks. These actions should, of course, be undertaken without discriminating against other populations also vulnerable to potentially dangerous circumstances.

Accountability

15. Disaster assistance is subject to the same audit oversight as other forms of aid. Grant recipients and

contractors are accountable for funds, supplies, materials, and equipment in accordance with the terms of their grants and contracts. International disaster assistance legislation contains a "notwithstanding" clause enabling goods and services to be procured outside the standard USG and USAID procedures during emergencies. As a matter of policy, the clear preference is for USAID to follow standard procurement procedures, to the maximum extent possible, for routine disaster procurement. It is acknowledged, however, that the interests of competition are secondary and must give way to the overriding objective of providing humanitarian assistance on a timely basis. Posts should, nevertheless, verify that contractors and grantees are responsible and that goods and services are reasonably priced. USAID missions in recipient countries are responsible for monitoring grantee and contractor programs, including disaster funds disbursement and accounting. Any questions regarding the "notwithstanding" clause can be directed to the USAID assistant general counsel/DCHA or the regional legal advisor.

Donations Guidance

16. USAID has developed a donations message based on years of experience by the international humanitarian community in dealing with the public's response to overseas disasters. Members of the public often respond to disasters by spontaneously collecting commodities or offering untrained volunteer services, both of which can seriously hamper relief efforts. Past experience has also demonstrated that public statements from USG officials concerning humanitarian aid are often misinterpreted as general pleas for any type of assistance, including commodities and volunteers. The message below is therefore designed to inform the public about the most effective and appropriate ways they can support humanitarian activities. The U.S. embassy or USAID mission can assist with these efforts by

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recommending the use of this message in any public statements:

A. The most effective way the American public can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. Information on identifying humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations is available from the Center for International Disaster Information (CIDI) - <http://www.cidi.org> or 703-276-1914 - and is also available at <http://www.interaction.org>.

B. It is a common misperception among the public that

all types of assistance are needed immediately following a disaster. This misperception often leads to spontaneous collections of unsolicited commodities and offers of volunteer services, which can impede relief efforts. Therefore, the USG encourages those who wish to help to make a cash donation to the humanitarian organization of their choice. Cash donations allow disaster relief professionals to procure the exact commodities needed (often locally in the affected county); reduce the burden on resources that tend to be scarce in disaster settings (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); transfer money quickly without transportation costs (which often outweigh the value of the donated commodities); support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.

17. The Denton Amendment (Section 402, Title 10 USC) authorizes the Secretary of Defense to transport privately donated humanitarian assistance supplies on a space-available basis. In general, such transportation occurs during the recovery and reconstruction phase, rather than during the relief phase. USAID generally does not view space-available military transportation of privately donated goods as an appropriate means of disaster response during the initial phase of a disaster, since the long list of reviews and administrative actions required for each request precludes the rapid shipment of supplies. Additional information about the Denton program can be accessed at the following website: <http://dentonfunded.ohasis.org/>.

18. For questions on donations issues, contact Nazik Salih, USAID/OFDA, at 202-712-0972 or Suzanne Brooks, CIDI, at 703-243-8900, ext. 22. Please do not release these phone numbers. Contact information for dissemination to the general public is included in paragraph 16A.

USAID/OFDA Regional Offices

19. USAID/OFDA Regional Advisors: USAID/OFDA maintains regional offices in several locations worldwide to assist in responding to disasters and to develop risk management strategies. USAID/OFDA/Washington strongly advises posts, especially MDROs, to maintain regular communication with the USAID/OFDA Regional Advisors. Regional Advisors are available to visit posts and perform emergency disaster assessments upon request. USAID/OFDA Regional Advisors should be the first point of contact if a USAID/OFDA regional office exists in the region. The following six sub-paragraphs identify the location and contact information for the various USAID/OFDA regional offices and sub-offices.

A. East and Central Africa: Mr. Jack Myer is USAID/OFDA's Principal Regional Advisor for East and

Central Africa in Nairobi, Kenya. Additional Regional Advisors for East and Central Africa are Mr. Alan Dwyer and Ms. Georgianna Platt. USAID/OFDA's East and Central Africa regional office can be reached at 254-20-862-2000.

B. Southern Africa: Mr. Harlan Hale is USAID/OFDA's Principal Regional Advisor for Southern Africa in Pretoria, South Africa. USAID/OFDA's Southern Africa regional office can be reached at 27-12-452-2000. An additional Regional Advisor for Southern Africa is Ms. Janice Wessel, based in Harare, Zimbabwe, along with Mr. Mark Adams, Humanitarian Program Specialist. They can be reached at 263-4-250-992 and 263-4-250-993, respectively.

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C. West and North Africa: Ms. Regina Davis is USAID/OFDA's Principal Regional Advisor for West Africa in Dakar, Senegal. An additional Regional Advisor for West Africa is Ms. Stefanie Sobol. USAID/OFDA's West Africa regional office can be reached at 221-33-869-6164.

D. Asia and the Pacific: Mr. William Berger is USAID/OFDA's Asia and Pacific Acting Principal Regional Advisor in Bangkok, Thailand. USAID/OFDA's Asia and Pacific regional office in Bangkok can be reached at 66-2-263-7461.

E. Latin America and the Caribbean: Mr. Tim Callaghan is USAID/OFDA's Principal Regional Advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in San Jose, Costa Rica. Other LAC Regional Advisors are Mr. Rene Carrillo, Mr. Phil Gelman, Ms. Julie Leonard, and Mr. Sidney Velado. USAID/OFDA's LAC regional office can be reached at 506-2296-3554 or at 506-2290-4133.

F. Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia: Mr. Rob Andrew is the Regional Advisor for Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia (EMCA) in Washington, DC. Mr. Andrew can be reached at 202-712-4419. The EMCA regional office will open in Budapest, Hungary, before the end of the calendar year.

USAID/OFDA Washington Contacts

20. All requests for funds, situation reports, and other information should be directed to the following Regional Coordinators at USAID/OFDA/Washington: Ms. Kasey Channell: 202-712-4167 (East and Central Africa); Ms. Lynn Marie Thomas: 202-712-1015 (Sudan and Southern, West, and North Africa); Mr. Rob Thayer: 202-712-1257 (Asia and the Pacific/Latin America and the Caribbean); and Mr. Rob Andrew: 202-712-4419 (Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia). If the Regional Coordinator is

not available, an alternative contact is Ms. Anne Convery, USAID/OFDA's Disaster Response Team leader. Ms. Convery can be contacted at 202-712-4029. Contact information is regularly updated on USAID/OFDA's website, http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/directory/index.html. The name and contact information of the appropriate Regional Coordinator or other designated team member will be included in USAID/OFDA's cable response to the disaster declaration. Missions/embassies also may call USAID/OFDA at 202-712-0400 during daytime hours (0800-1700 hours local time) in Washington, DC. After business hours, evenings, weekends, and holidays, the USAID/OFDA duty officer may be contacted by phone at 301-675-5953 or by email via BlackBerry at OFDAdutyofficer@usaid.gov. Alternatively, the USAID/OFDA duty officer may be reached by calling the State Department's operations center at 202-647-1512. USAID/OFDA's fax numbers are 202-216-3706/3191.

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