Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for International Development

Washington D.C. 20523

HAITI - Hurricane David

Date: August 31 - September 1, 1979 (FY 79)

Location: Northern, northwestern, and southern areas of Haiti

No. Dead: 8

No. Affected: 1,110 homeless

Damage: 2 hospitals damaged; 100 houses destroyed or damaged; animals carried away and heavy crop damage due to flooding. Jean-Rabel, Mole St. Nicholas, Baie de Henne areas especially hard hit as rivers became rampaging torrents; in Baie de Henne the river flooded the entire valley farming area, destroying the irrigation system and covering land with salt water and debris

The Disaster

Hurricane David dramatically shifted course at the last minute, sparing Haiti the brunt of the storm; Port-au-Prince suffered no major dislocations. However, there was substantial damage, primarily due to flooding, in the northern, northwestern, and southern areas of the country.

Action Taken by the Government of Haiti (GOH)

For the first time, the GOH took precautionary steps in response to the threatened hurricane. The director of the Haitian Red Cross called a meeting of GOH representatives and donor agencies to survey the availability of food and to determine the ability to respond to emergency relief needs. The group agreed to set up a disaster coordinating committee under the Red Cross, with the ministries of Planning, Public Works, Health, and Army Transport, as well as A.I.D. as members. An emergency alert was declared; the GOH charted a five-meter line in Port-au-Prince and planned the evacuation of as many of the 200,000 plus residents of low-lying areas as possible to schools, churches, warehouses, and other public buildings on higher ground.

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When it was clear that Port-au-Prince had been spared the worst of the storm, the GOH cancelled the emergency alert. At the final meeting of the disaster coordinating committee, it was agreed that much had been learned but that further work was needed to overcome organizational and other difficulties in the future. A seminar was planned to continue preparedness efforts.

The Haitian Red Cross provided emergency food assistance to victims in flooded areas.

Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

On September 13, 1979, the U.S. Ambassador determined that a disaster situation existed and donated the disaster relief funds available to him to the Haitian-American Community Help Organization (HACHO) and CARE. HACHO/CARE used the funds for the local purchase of tools, cement, pipe, etc. needed for the repair of roads, water supply systems, and irrigation networks, as well as for labor costs.....$25,000

TOTAL $25,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

Haitian-American Community Help Organization (HACHO) and CARE - undertook repair of roads, and water supply and irrigation systems

Assistance Provided by the International Community

None reported.