



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for
International
Development

Washington D.C.
20523

HAITI - Fire

Date: May 16-17, 1986

Location: La Saline area of Port-au-Prince

No. Dead: 1

No. Affected: 3,300 homeless

Damage: 1,088 huts destroyed

The Disaster

Fires broke out on two consecutive days in May 1986 in the populous La Saline slum area of Port-au-Prince. On May 16, fire swept through Block Rue 9, destroying approximately 549 huts and causing the death of a two-year old child. A second blaze the following day razed another 539 huts in Block Desmangles but caused no further deaths or injuries. The 3,300 people left homeless by the two fires lost all their household goods and personal belongings.

Action Taken by the Government of Haiti (GOH)

The Haitian Red Cross (HRC) offered assistance to the fire victims immediately after the blaze, and the GOH's Organization Pre-Desastre et de Secours (OPDES) conducted a damage assessment in the days following the disaster. However, neither the GOH nor local organizations had the resources to respond adequately to the victims' needs.

In a letter to USAID/Haiti, OPDES requested U.S. assistance in providing foodstuffs and basic necessities to the homeless. The distribution of P.L. 480 Title II commodities made available from the in-country stocks was carried out through the Mayor's office by the La Saline Community Action Councils under OPDES supervision.

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Assistance Provided by the United States Government

After hearing the results of the OPDES damage assessment on May 29, U.S. Ambassador Clayton E. McManaway, Jr., determined that USG relief assistance was warranted in the La Saline fire disaster. From his disaster assistance authority, he donated the equivalent of \$5,000 in local currency to the relief effort. A check was presented to the mayor of Port-au-Prince on June 5.

In response to the GOH request for emergency food assistance, the Mission authorized the release of 88 MT of P.L. 480 Title II commodities from the regular programs of PVO cooperating sponsors. The foodstuffs, which included SFB, NFCM, NFDM, and vegoil, were donated on a non-replacement basis.

TOTAL \$5,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

CARE - reallocated 88 MT of P.L. 480 Title II commodities from regular program stocks for the emergency feeding of 3,300 fire victims for approximately two months. (See USG Assistance.)

Food for the Poor - furnished materials for rebuilding 360 dwellings as part of OPDES/UNDRO emergency housing program.

Assistance Provided by the International Community

International Organizations

UNDRO - assisted OPDES in the design and implementation of a home reconstruction project and contributed \$11,788 in cash. The OPDES/UNDRO contribution focused on the provision of sanitation and water services and adequate fire protection. By early February 1987, 360 dwellings had been rebuilt, public water fountains installed, and restoration of water drainage system and latrines was under way. Drainage channels were being extended to ensure some benefits to disadvantaged homes not directly affected by the fire but in the immediate vicinity.

Governments

Switzerland - supported the OPDES/UNDRO emergency housing project by providing the services of a technical specialist to design and assist in implementing the project (the value of this contribution is reflected in the Haiti Floods case report), and contributed \$71,212 in cash.

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United Kingdom - provided \$50,000 through UNDRO to support the
OPDES/UNDRO emergency housing project.

TOTAL \$133,000