



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for
International
Development

Washington D.C.
20523

HAITI - Drought

Date: June 1981 (FY 81)

Location: South and Southwest

No. Dead: None reported

No. Affected: 103,000 children

Damage: Continuing drought and declining food production contributed to the rapid deterioration of nutrition levels among the population of southern and southwestern Haiti. There was a dramatic increase in the incidence of second and third degree malnutrition among children 0-5 years of age.

The Disaster

Damages inflicted by Hurricane Allen in 1980 severely depleted the food and production capacity of Haiti's southwestern zone. Despite a large influx of international assistance, two consecutive seasons of drought resulted in three failed harvests. The resulting food shortages and associated high price of available food combined to produce widespread malnutrition among the population of the affected zone. Nutrition surveys conducted in June 1981 in the southwest indicated that nutrition levels among children were lower than before Hurricane Allen. Second and third degree malnutrition among the 0-5 year old age group rose to 30-40% in populations with normal incidences of 10-15%.

Action Taken by the Government of Haiti (GOH)

The GOH Department of Public Health and Population and the Bureau of Nutrition, with assistance from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), undertook a nutritional status assessment of thirty sites in the south and southwest. Arm circumference measurements were taken of children aged 0-5 years. The collected data were sent to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta to be analysed and compared with data collected during a 1978 CDC nutritional survey of the same thirty sites.

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Assistance Provided by United States Government (USG)

In response to a request from the GOH, and in recognition of the deteriorating nutritional status of a large proportion of the child population of the affected region, on June 12, 1981, the U.S. Ambassador to Haiti declared that a disaster existed in Haiti and activated use of his \$25,000 disaster authority. Of this amount, \$12,500 was used to purchase 223 MT of hybrid corn seeds locally.

600 MT of undistributed P.L. 480 Title II corn-soy-milk, bulgur, and vegetable oil, originally donated to Haiti for Hurricane Allen relief, were distributed by Catholic Relief Services (CRS). CRS received a grant of \$12,500 to cover the cost of logistics, personnel, and distribution of these commodities. Of the 600 MT, 450 MT were earmarked for distribution through the A.I.D. Food For Work (FFW) program and 150 MT were distributed through the GOH maternal-child health centers/dispensaries. Some 5,000 workers engaged in road and irrigation system construction and reforestation and road rehabilitation projects were expected to receive food rations for 25,000 family members through the FFW program.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta provided analysis and technical support to the GOH nutritional survey by analysing survey data and comparing these data to those collected during a CDC nutritional survey of the same populations conducted in 1978.

TOTAL \$25,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

With funding from the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) undertook the distribution of 600 MT of P.L. 480 Title II commodities through their existing program of maternal-child health and the A.I.D. Food For Work program.

Assistance Provided by the International Community

None reported.