

Agency for
International
Development

11th
Report

**Foreign
Disaster
Emergency
Relief**

Fiscal Year
1971

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Special thanks should also go to U.S. Missions, the Department of Defense, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Catholic Relief Services, Church World Service, and the American National Red Cross, for many of the photographs which appear throughout this report.

STATEMENT OF THE FOREIGN DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR

As previous recipients of these annual reports know, its foreign disaster case studies are limited to those in which the U.S. Government has provided some degree of assistance. Although essentially a fiscal year report, liberties have been taken with the period of its coverage to provide full information on disasters occurring during fiscal 1971 but also carrying over into fiscal 1972. These include East Pakistan civil strife, India refugees, Chad and worldwide cholera and Chilean storms. We are also extending the reporting period to provide comments on more recent developments, including the reorganization of A.I.D. and in particular its Office of Foreign Disaster Relief Coordination, significant disaster coordination developments in the United Nations and certain preparedness projects.

The publication date of the report has always been an unpredictable event since its composition necessarily must be subordinated to the emergency operations of the office. To overcome this problem we now plan to issue individual disaster case studies on a more current basis—that is, as soon as an emergency period is over and sufficient information has been assembled from Missions and other sources. In this connection it would be helpful if those organizations which provide us with data keep the new plan in mind and submit their material as early as possible.

Individually issued disaster case studies will in content be essentially the same as those contained in previous annual reports. To round out a year's activities a brief fiscal year

summary will be issued, providing disaster statistics, data supplemental to previously issued case studies, and a brief description of major developments and highlights in the field of disaster assistance.

Strengthening U.S. Foreign Disaster Relief

On January 24, 1972, Dr. John A. Hannah, Administrator of the Agency for International Development, announced an internal reform for A.I.D., which included the establishment of a new Bureau for Population and Humanitarian Assistance which would consolidate activities relating some of the most urgent needs of people—help in disasters, hunger, and over-population.

The new Bureau was directed by the Administrator to “strengthen A.I.D.’s disaster relief capability by providing higher level policy direction, better coordination of public and private responses to requirements, and increased competence in effectively coordinating U.S. activities through the United Nations.”

Some actions have already been taken to meet this goal. They include approval by the Administrator of the following recommendations made by Dr. Jarold A. Kieffer, newly appointed head of the Bureau for Population and Humanitarian Assistance:

1. To elevate A.I.D.’s foreign disaster relief function to become one of the three principal offices of the new Bureau, to be known as the “Office of the Foreign Disaster Relief Coordinator.”
2. To establish a professionally planned and equipped

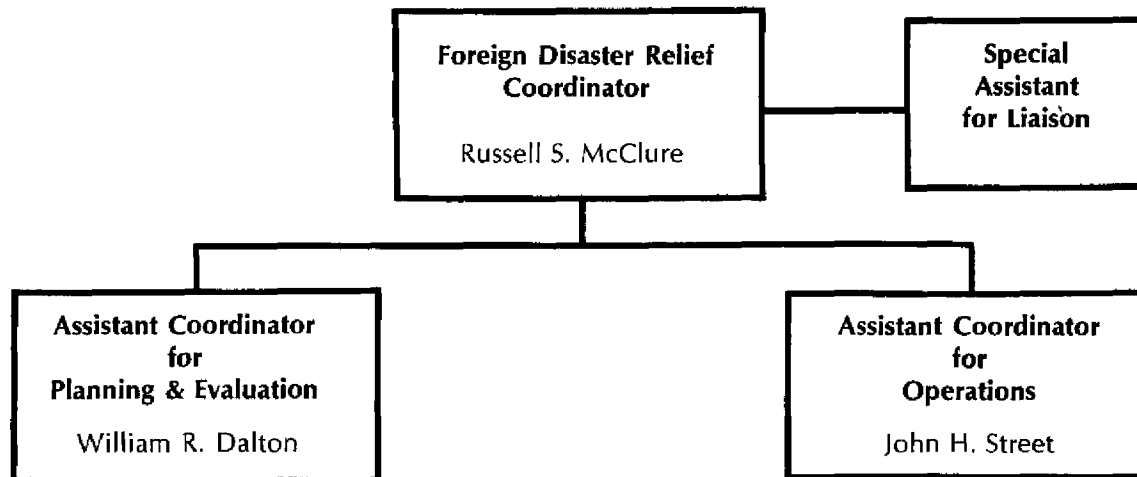
Foreign Disaster Operations Center and Information Exchange.

3. To effect a modest increase in personnel to strengthen external liaison activities, improve reporting and fiscal control and staff the disaster information exchange center. The liaison effect will be served by a Special Assistant to the Coordinator who will be responsible for establishing and maintaining systematic liaison with all interested public and private entities, including international organizations.

Other activities designed to strengthen U.S. foreign disaster assistance are under active consideration.

Simultaneous with the creation of the new Population and Humanitarian Assistance Bureau, A.I.D.'s Disaster Relief Division also underwent organizational changes designed to give full attention to both the planning and operations functions.

**BUREAU FOR POPULATION AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE
OFFICE of FOREIGN DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR**



Foreign Disaster Relief Coordinator Preparedness Activities

Training—The third AID/FDRC sponsored international seminar in disaster planning and preparedness convened on May 8, 1972. For the first time in the annual series attendance reached the maximum number considered practical for this kind of program. Seventeen are expected to participate in all or part of the five-week activity. Of this number fourteen participants are representing: Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Iran, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru. Later in the program two delegates from Japan are expected to join the group, providing a description of disaster prevention and fire fighting in that country. We are pleased also to have representatives present this year from the United Nations, the Organization of American States and the Pan American Health Organization.

The previous seminar, second in the current series, held in the fall of 1970 was attended by representatives from Barbados, South Korea, East Pakistan, Philippines, Turkey and Venezuela.

In addition to a basic program of disaster planning and preparedness, these seminars provide an opportunity for participants to meet with counterparts from other countries to share their independently-developed solutions to disaster problems common to all; review recent scientific and technical advances in the field of disaster planning and assistance; and analyze and test national disaster plans with a view toward their improvement.

Medical Supplies—A long recognized need for a Disaster Medical Supply Component List that would enable USG overseas Missions to evaluate requests for drugs made by disaster countries has been realized. Developed by Miss Virginia Worsley of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, for FDRC, such an inventory has now been distributed to all Missions setting forth basic medicines, antibiotics and equipment against which judgments can be made and costs determined. The list provides recommended amounts needed to meet the emergency needs for 10,000 and 25,000 population units. The A.I.D. Foreign Disaster Relief Coordinator has arranged for storage of all items on the list, except vaccines, in the Panama Reserve sufficient for a population of 10,000.

Additional Disaster Reserves—Plans are being advanced to pre-position stocks of disaster relief supplies in the Western Pacific region. Consideration is also being given to the establishment of similar regional supply depots in the Near East as well as South Asia.

United Nations Disaster Relief Coordination

During the past year the UN has shown its willingness to play a significant role in the coordination of worldwide responses to major disasters and has demonstrated its value in this role in a complex humanitarian relief program in Bangladesh. The U.S. Government will continue to cooperate in furthering future multilateral coordination. At the same time, bilateral arrangements appear to be necessary in many instances, especially for smaller disasters.

FY 1971 also marked a major breakthrough in efforts to establish a permanent international central mechanism to plan for and coordinate disaster relief through the UN. The General Assembly in December 1971 passed a comprehensive resolution that created the UN Office of Disaster Relief Coordinator. On January 14, 1972, the UN announced the appointment of Faruk N. Berkol, formerly Ambassador for Turkey to Belgium, as the first UN Disaster Relief Coordinator. Ambassador Berkol arrived at UN headquarters in Geneva the latter part of March to take up his new duties and responsibilities. The office is to direct international relief efforts in cases of natural or other disasters, promote the prevention and prediction of natural disasters, provide advice to governments on pre-disaster planning and disseminate information relevant to disaster relief.

Months before authorization of the Office of the UN Disaster Relief Coordinator, the UN had become involved in coordinating the large-scale multilateral relief effort in Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan). The Secretary-General assumed this responsibility in May 1971 following the outbreak of civil strife in East Pakistan in March. Considerable progress had been made by the UN by the end of 1971. Even though its operations were disrupted by violence and war, UN officials remained in the area and practically all of the UN relief equipment and supplies were retained in country or in Singapore for prompt resumption of emergency relief after the fourteen-day war.

In March 1972 Sir Robert Jackson of Australia was appointed by the UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, to direct the United Nations Relief Operations—Dacca

(UNROD). The UNROD staff consists of 116 people in Dacca, including UNICEF. A massive effort on the part of the world community, coordinated by the UN in co-operation with the Government of Bangladesh, is underway to import food and to provide internal transport, which is the critical requirement in order to distribute food supplies to an estimated 30 million of the 75 million population.

For this new program, the U.S. Government, as of April 15, 1972, had made food commitments to the UN of 500,000 metric tons of rice, wheat and oil valued at \$73 million; had made a cash grant to the UN for \$31 million to assist with transportation and internal logistical requirements, charter inland waterway vessels and aircraft, purchase agricultural and housing reconstruction equipment and materials, and for administrative purposes. Another \$4 million has been obligated to purchase and ship relief supplies and vehicles as requested by the UN.

International Committee of the Red Cross

During FY 1971, ICRC also was involved in multilateral coordination of aid for victims of civil strife in Jordan. ICRC administered the Jordan relief operation utilizing the combined resources furnished by the League of Red Cross Societies, voluntary agencies and nineteen contributing countries.

ICRC is also involved in assisting minority groups in Bangladesh and in administering prisoner-of-war provisions of the Geneva Convention. It is receiving worldwide assistance for its program from national societies.

The U.S. Government has made a cash grant of \$500,000 and earmarked an additional \$500,000 for the ICRC relief program.

In retrospect, looking at the developments which occurred in the field of U.S. foreign disaster relief during the reporting period and in the last few months, both within and outside of Government and in the UN, it is clear a new level of momentum has been achieved which holds promise for both the immediate and long-range future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. McClure".

Russell S. McClure

REGIONAL REVIEW

Africa

As in past years, drought/food emergencies were the major focus of U.S. emergency relief. Of particular note was the establishment of a cooperative grain stabilization program between the governments of four chronic drought countries in West Central Africa and A.I.D., with the aim of preparing in advance for anticipated droughts and alleviating food shortages before they can develop into disaster situations. The program is being directed by the Food for Peace Division of A.I.D.

An unfortunate development in Africa during fiscal year 1971 was the outbreak of cholera in seventeen countries below the Sahara. A.I.D. is supporting the World Health Organization in a continuing surveillance of the spread, prevention and treatment of cholera.

Asia

The greatest disasters generating the largest number of victims occurred in the South Asian region during fiscal 1971. The cyclone which struck East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in November of 1970 was the worst disaster of this century in terms of the number of lives lost. Four months after the cyclone, civil strife erupted in East Pakistan resulting in almost 10 million Bengalis fleeing across the border into India—the greatest movement of refugees within the time frame of a few months ever crossing from one country to another. The situation

culminated in war between India and the Central Government of West Pakistan. These three events took a minimum of 505,560 lives and seriously affected some 30 million people. Of the \$206 million in U.S. assistance for 51 disasters in fiscal year 1971, 75% was directed toward emergencies in East Pakistan and India. There remains now the problems of providing shelter, food and medical help for the refugees who have returned to Bangladesh from India and the additional millions who remained in the country but were displaced by the civil strife and war.

Asia—East

The five typhoons which struck the Philippines between August 31 and November 19, 1970 demonstrated the tragedy of inadequate warning in one instance and its importance in saving lives in another. The newly established Philippines National Disaster Control Center was surely tested beyond normal expectations and it performed effectively. An innovation for disaster relief following the first typhon, "Fran," was the distribution of nutribuns. These were introduced in the Philippines through an A.I.D./voluntary agency-assisted school nutrition program, using USG Food for Peace commodities. The high protein, extra nutritious roll created to tackle the problem of undernourished children in elementary schools. Its read-to-eat state and nutritional values makes it a particularly valuable food source for disaster victims temporarily without cooking facilities.

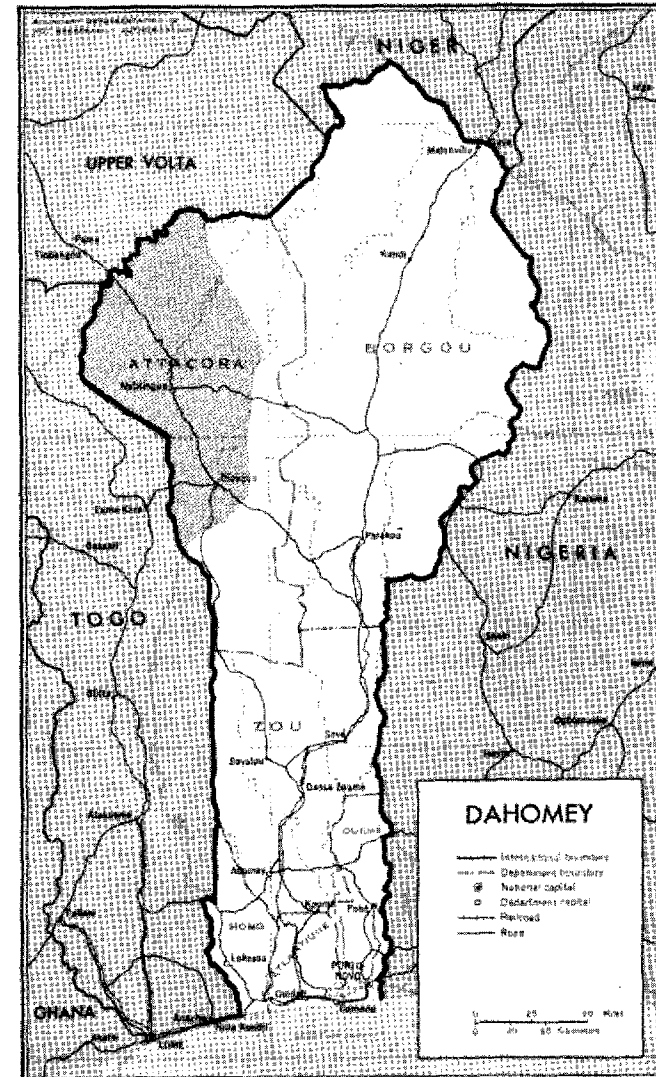
Latin America

While the magnitude of the disasters and the amount of U. S. assistance required was considerably less than for

the NESAs (now ASIS) region, Latin America again had the most disasters. There were seventeen, eleven of which were floods or storm disasters. Areas where disaster planning and preparedness programs are operational continue to show increased capability to handle disaster relief operations and to rely less often on U. S. or other outside assistance. Experience gained following the May 31, 1970 Peru earthquake—the worst disaster even to strike the Western Hemisphere—was reflected in the speed and effectiveness with which the Government of Peru and its relief organizations were able to the response to later disasters in FY 1971, including an earthquake and several floods.

Europe

A flood in Genoa Province of Italy was the only European disaster during FY 1971 in which U. S. help was requested. This was a particularly destructive disaster caused by torrential rains, but the Government of Italy demonstrated a good disaster relief capability that was responsive to the needs of the flood victims. Italian self-help exceeded \$120 million. U. S. help was minor in terms of dollar costs, but the immediate dispatch of trucks, specialized cleaning equipment and U.S. Military personnel from nearby bases to assist in clearing oily residue was timely and deeply appreciated.



DAHOMÉY

Floods

September 1970

...destroy 60% of plantings and harvest in some areas of Northern Dahomey.

Value of USG Assistance\$104,000

DETAILS:

During 1969 and the first half of 1970, adverse weather reduced the plantings and harvests in the Atacora region. Disaster followed when in September of 1970 heavy rains destroyed or severely damaged crops, reducing harvests in some regions to 40 percent of normal. With no food reserves, because of previous low harvests, large numbers of people verged on starvation. A number of roads and bridges were destroyed, making transport of food from other areas of the country difficult.

The most seriously affected regions were Tanguieta, Kouande and Athieme but Natitingou, Boukombe and parts of Mono, all along the flood path, were also severely affected.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF DAHOMEY AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS:

The Government of Dahomey issued a special decree declaring Tanguieta, Kouande and Athieme disaster areas and created a Committee of National Solidarity to collect contributions. Urgent work was undertaken to repair the more important roads and bridges leading into disaster areas. A "Food for Work" program was established to attract workers to repair projects.

The Government urgently appealed for food and appropriated \$18,000 to transport emergency food.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE U. S. GOVERNMENT:

The American Ambassador exercised his disaster relief authority and made a cash contribution from the AID contingency fund for worldwide disaster relief of \$ 4,000

These funds were used to help pay transport costs of food trucked to the disaster regions. Also 650 tons of USG P. L. 480 beans and rice in Cotonou were shipped north to the affected areas. Value of these commodities estimated at \$100,000

\$104,000

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY U. S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES:

Catholic Relief Services

The Director of CRS in Dahomey, Fr. Roger Bisson, worked closely with Dahomey government officials and the American Ambassador to coordinate the release of food stocks by the Embassy and expedite their movement north. He made a personal inspection trip of the disaster area with an Embassy officer to assess relief needs and operations. He closely controlled the final disposition of food commodities. The U.S. Embassy singled out Fr. Bisson for special praise because of his effectiveness in augmenting the Embassy's role in this flood disaster.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY OTHER NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

The French, German, Israeli and Chinese diplomatic missions in Cotonou each contributed an equivalent of \$4,000 to the National Disaster Committee headed by the Dahomey Minister of Health for a total of \$16,000

