

# HOW THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PROVIDES HUMANITARIAN AID

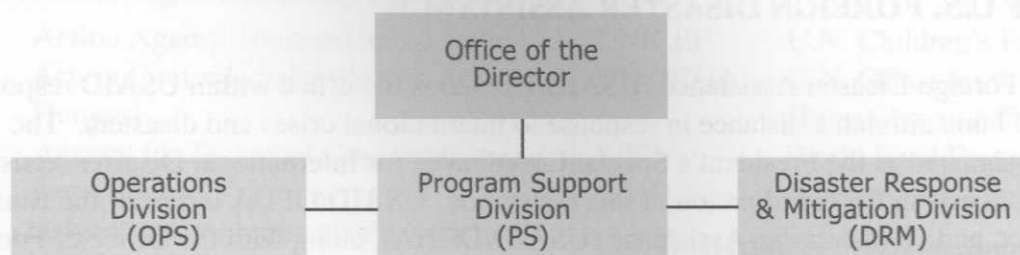
## THE OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) is the office within USAID responsible for providing non-food humanitarian assistance in response to international crises and disasters. The USAID Administrator is designated as the President's Special Coordinator for International Disaster Assistance and USAID/OFDA assists in the coordination of this assistance. USAID/OFDA is part of the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/DCHA), along with the Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP), the Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI), the Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation (USAID/PVC), the Office of American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (USAID/ASHA), the Office of Democracy and Governance (USAID/DG), the Office of Program, Policy, and Management (USAID/PPM), and the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (USAID/CMM).

USAID/OFDA is organized into three divisions, under the management of the Office of the Director. The Disaster Response and Mitigation (DRM) division is responsible for coordinating with other organizations for the provision of relief supplies and humanitarian assistance. DRM also devises, coordinates, and implements program strategies for the application of science and technology to prevention, mitigation, and national and international preparedness initiatives for a variety of natural and human-caused disaster situations. The Operations (OPS) division develops and manages logistical, operational, and technical support for disaster responses. OPS maintains readiness to respond to emergencies through several mechanisms, including managing Search and Rescue (SAR) Teams, Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DART), and Washington-based Response Management Teams (RMT). The Program Support (PS) division provides programmatic and administrative support, including budget/financial services, procurement planning, contracts and grants administration, general administrative support, and communication support for both USAID/OFDA and its field offices.



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USAID/OFDA/DRM provides humanitarian assistance in response to a declaration of a foreign disaster made by the U.S. Ambassador or the U.S. Department of State. Once an event or situation is determined to require U.S. Government (USG) assistance, USAID/OFDA can immediately provide up to \$50,000 to the U.S. Embassy or USAID Mission to purchase relief supplies locally or give a contribution to a relief organization in the affected country. *(Note: On April 1, 2002, the \$25,000 funding level was increased to \$50,000.)* USAID/OFDA can also send its own relief commodities, such as plastic sheeting, tents, blankets, and water purification units, from its four stockpiles in Guam, Honduras, Italy, and Maryland, as well as a smaller cache in Florida. Increasingly, USAID/OFDA deploys short- or long-term field personnel to countries where disasters are occurring or threaten to occur, and, in some cases, dispatches a DART.

The largest percentage of USAID/OFDA's assistance goes to relief and rehabilitation project grants managed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including U.S. private voluntary organizations (PVOs) registered with USAID, and United Nations (U.N.) organizations *(See pie chart on next page)*. Relief projects include airlifting supplies to affected populations in remote locations, managing primary health care and supplementary feeding centers, and providing shelter materials to disaster evacuees and displaced persons. A rehabilitation project might immunize dislocated populations against disease, provide seeds and tools to farmers who have been adversely affected by disasters, drill water wells, or rehabilitate water systems in drought-stricken countries. USAID/OFDA carefully monitors the organizations implementing these projects to ensure that resources are used wisely and to determine if the project needs to be adapted to changing conditions. The goal of each project is to meet the humanitarian needs of the affected population, with the aim of returning the beneficiaries to self-sufficiency.

Section 491 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, provides flexible authority that permits USAID/OFDA to respond to the needs of disaster victims in a timely manner. USAID/OFDA follows the standard USAID procedures for routine procurements, but utilizes expedited or modified procedures when necessary to achieve its disaster response objectives. The first principle in disaster response accountability is to ensure that appropriate assistance gets to the neediest victims in time to minimize death and alleviate human suffering. Procurement and accounting procedures may be expedited, but must include effective systems of internal control.

Not all of USAID/OFDA's assistance goes to providing aid in response to disasters. USAID/OFDA's mitigation staff oversees a portfolio of projects designed to reduce the impact of disasters on victims and economic assets in disaster-prone countries. USAID/OFDA has invested in a number of programs in partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, the World Environment Center, and other offices within USAID. These programs not only enhance a country's capacity to manage its own disasters and hazards, but also promote the transfer of technology, goods, and services between the United States and its host country. USAID/OFDA mitigation-related programs range from investing in drought early warning systems that can possibly head off

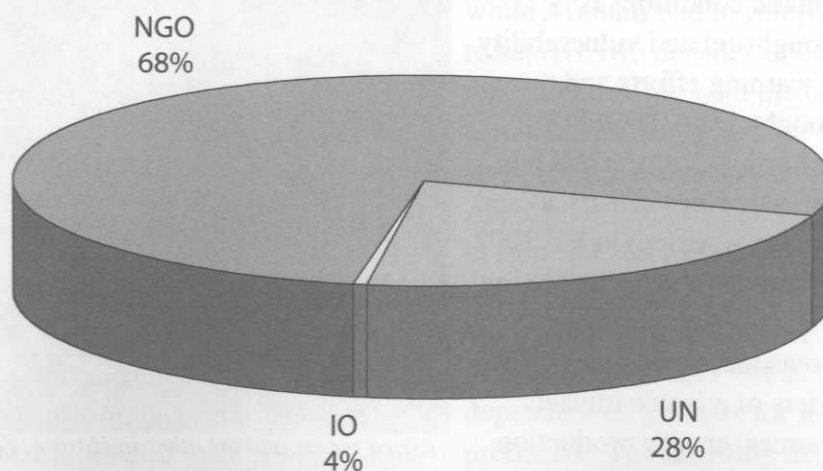
a famine to training local relief workers to manage the response to a disaster more effectively. USAID/OFDA is increasingly investing in programs designed to prevent, mitigate, prepare, and plan for complex emergencies, which are more the result of human actions than of acts of nature.

## OTHER U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICES THAT PROVIDE FOREIGN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

USAID/OFDA is not the only office within the USG that provides humanitarian aid to foreign countries. USAID/FFP is responsible for administering the USG's foreign food aid programs, under U.S. Public Law (P.L.) 480 Titles II and III. Title II emergency food aid programs are targeted to vulnerable populations suffering from food insecurity as a result of natural disasters, civil conflict or other crises. Title II emergency food aid is provided without repayment requirements, whereas Title III food aid is provided as a bilateral grant program to countries in need of assistance. USAID/OTI is the office within USAID responsible for providing assistance to countries that are in a stage of transition from crisis to recovery. Its assistance is designed to facilitate the transition to peace and democracy by aiding in the demobilization of combatants or developing democratic governance and media structures within the affected country. Other parts of USAID, such as the regional bureaus, provide development aid, which often complements humanitarian relief programs or can be regarded as disaster rehabilitation or reconstruction assistance. Countries that have achieved sustainable development are less likely to require massive USG humanitarian assistance.

Besides USAID, three of the largest providers of USG humanitarian assistance are the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) and the U.S. Department of Defense's Office of Stability Operations (DOD/SO). USAID Missions and Regional Bureaus work closely with USAID/FFP in allocating surplus food commodities to developing countries, under the Section 416(b) program of the Agricultural Act of 1949. This food aid is often used for emergency feeding programs in countries experiencing food shortages due to drought or civil strife. State/PRM provides multilateral grants to international relief organizations in response to refugee emergency appeals and contributes to the regular program budgets of organizations such as the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). DOD/SO coordinates the utilization of DOD assets for humanitarian assistance overseas. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also provide technical assistance, in coordination with USAID/OFDA, in response to disasters and potential hazards overseas.❖

**USAID/OFDA FUNDING OF GRANTS BY AGENCY TYPE - FY 2002**



## REDUCING VULNERABILITY AND RESTORING LIVELIHOODS FOR DROUGHT-AFFECTED POPULATIONS

According to the United Nations World Food Program, more than 32 million people in Central Asia, the Greater Horn of Africa, and southern Africa were affected by drought during FY 2002. For a significant number of these people, drought was a chronic threat to their ability to provide for their families, increasing the risk of poverty, disease, and displacement. To assist those affected, USAID/OFDA initiated a multi-sector approach to mitigate the effects of drought through health programs, water and sanitation improvements, agricultural rehabilitation, and early-warning initiatives. USAID/OFDA's approach reduced vulnerability, lessened human suffering, and saved lives. By providing more than \$133 million in FY 2002 for emergency relief and mitigation assistance to Afghanistan, the Greater Horn of Africa, and southern Africa, USAID/OFDA had a direct and positive impact on the lives of an estimated 28 million drought-affected people.

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### ***Early Warning Systems***

Reliable prediction of climatic conditions is essential in preventing drought-related vulnerability. In order to enhance early warning efforts and mitigate the impact of drought, USAID/OFDA supported a Drought Monitoring Center (DMC) in Nairobi, Kenya (for the Greater Horn of Africa) and Harare, Zimbabwe (for southern Africa) in FY 2002. The DMCs were and continue to be responsible for monitoring droughts and issuing warnings based on 10-day, monthly, and seasonal timeframes. The warnings notify stakeholders of adverse impacts on agriculture, water resources, energy production, health, and other socio-economic sectors. Although

the 2000-2002 drought was one of the worst climatic periods in the history of the Greater Horn and southern Africa regions, the overall impact was relatively minimal due to the activities and efforts of the DMCs. National governments were able to appeal early for food donations allowing donors to respond in time. Government officials and implementing partners managed water allocation for hydropower production, and assisted farmers in choosing suitable crop varieties.

The DMCs produced seasonal climate outlooks, monthly bulletins that discuss 30-day regional rainfall distribution, drought severity, monthly/seasonal temperature, rainfall deviations from long-term averages, weather outlooks, and agro-meteorological



*USAID/OFDA supports two Drought Monitoring Centers, one based in Nairobi, Kenya providing coverage for the Horn of Africa region and the other in Harare, Zimbabwe monitoring southern Africa.*