



**Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA)
Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, San Jose, Costa Rica**

DISASTER RESPONSE



Photo by Kendra Helmer, USAID

A mother cares for her children at the International Medical Corps cholera treatment center in Artibonite. In response to the cholera outbreak, USAID has provided medical supplies to treat more than 530,000 cholera patients.

USAID Helps Combat Haiti Cholera Outbreak

As of January 21, USAID has provided more than \$42 million to help combat the cholera outbreak in Haiti.

Since late October, a USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (USAID/DART) has worked closely with the Government of Haiti and the international community to prevent cholera cases, reduce the number of cases requiring hospitalization, and reduce the case fatality rate.

The USAID cholera assistance plan includes four elements: providing chlorine to increase safe drinking water availability; expanding national hygiene education outreach; providing oral rehydration salts (ORS) and medical supplies; and increasing the number of

cholera treatment facilities, particularly in underserved and rural areas.

To date, U.S. Government funding has established 33 cholera treatment facilities with 1,178 beds. USAID has distributed more than 5.3 million ORS sachets, to benefit an estimated 530,000 people; nearly 600,000 liters of I.V. fluids, to benefit an estimated 75,000 moderately and severely affected cholera patients; and 1,000 cots, with an additional 1,000 cots scheduled for shipment.

In addition to providing 100 metric tons of soap and 7,680 family hygiene kits, USAID is supporting a nationwide campaign to promote public awareness

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USAID/OFDA Senior Regional Advisor Tim Callaghan (left) and American Refugee Committee Health Coordinator Dr. Tshianda Alerte inspect USAID/OFDA-funded supplies to help fight cholera in the Terrain Acra camp.



Photo by Rebecca Gustafson, USAID/OFDA

DISASTER RESPONSE

Assisting Families in Brazil After Floods and Landslides

Heavy rains in Brazil since late December have caused severe floods and landslides that have displaced more than 100,000 people in four southeastern states: Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Minas Gerais, and Espirito Santo.

The hardest-hit state is Rio de Janeiro, where officials have confirmed more than 761 deaths and 400 people reported missing as of January 21.

In response to the emergency, USAID/OFDA is providing \$100,000 through USAID/Brazil to the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) to assist affected families.

The USAID/OFDA regional team, including Brazil-based USAID/OFDA disaster risk management specialist Antonio Pinheiro, will continue to monitor the situation in close coordination with the U.S. Embassy and USAID/Brazil.



Photo courtesy of ADRA

Heavy rains severely affected Teresópolis, in the Serra Region of Rio de Janeiro State.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

USAID/OFDA Publishes RDAP Course Descriptions on Website

A description of the USAID/OFDA-supported Regional Disaster Assistance Program (RDAP) training portfolio, which includes 17 courses in Spanish, English, French, and Portuguese on disaster risk management, first response, forest fire prevention and control, methods of instruction, and school safety programs, has been posted on the USAID website.

The pre-work and reference materials for the courses can be downloaded from the portfolio page, which is located at www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/publications/prep_mit/RDAP_training/index.html

COMING UP

Regional Stakeholder Consultation Forums

From January 24 to 26, USAID/OFDA and the Center for the Coordination of Natural Disasters Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC) held a forum with government representatives and key disaster preparedness and response partners in the region. During the meeting, held in Antigua, Guatemala, USAID/OFDA shared its five-year disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean with stakeholders.

USAID/OFDA/LAC plans to organize similar sub-regional consultation meetings for the Caribbean and South America later this year to promote the regional DRR strategy.

Costa Rican Firefighters Mobilization

USAID/OFDA disaster risk management specialists (DRMS) Luisa Alfaro and Fernando Calderón are providing technical assistance for Costa Rica's IV National Forest Firefighter Brigade Mobilization Exercise, scheduled from January 27 to 30 in Agua Caliente de Cartago.

ICS Software Development Workshop

DRMS Luisa Alfaro and Pedro Soto are organizing a workshop to review the software that the RDAP is developing to assist emergency response organizations implement the incident command system (ICS).

The workshop is scheduled to take place from February 1 to 2 in San Jose, Costa Rica, with participants from Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, and Mexico.

RDAP Meetings with Stakeholders

The RDAP, which provides DRR training and technical assistance and disaster response assistance in Latin America and the Caribbean, is organizing a series of meetings with stakeholders in the countries the program covers.

Upcoming meetings include one in Saint Lucia on February 3, organized by DRMS Beryl Armbrister, and one in Colombia on February 9, organized by DRMS Juan Carlos Lobo.

Pilot Course on EOC Management

DRMS Michael Camchong and Sergio David Gutiérrez are organizing a pilot RDAP course on emergency operations center (EOC) management. The course and an instructor training for the course is scheduled to take place near Quito, Ecuador, from February 14 to 21.

Pilot Course on Effective Use of Water

Forest fire expert and DRMS Luisa Alfaro is organizing the first RDAP course on effective use of water for forest fire management. The pilot course, developed for the leaders of firefighter brigades in countries where USAID/OFDA has provided water pumps to help combat forest fires, is scheduled to take place in Guanacaste, Costa Rica, from February 21 to 26, with participants from Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Paraguay.

Helping Haiti Promote Cholera Prevention

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of cholera prevention and treatment and is training more than 9,800 community health workers and hygiene promoters throughout the country.

Additionally, USAID has delivered 30 metric tons of chlorine, enough to provide nationwide treatment of Haiti's municipal water system for three months, and 15 million water purification tablets, enough to help 750,000 people in rural areas outside the municipal water system.

"Given the gravity of the cholera emergency and the challenges that remain as a result of the earthquake, we needed to respond in a very aggressive manner to support cholera treatment facilities and to provide supplies to help to save lives," said USAID/OFDA Senior Regional Advisor Tim Callaghan, who led the USAID/DART from late December until January 27, when it transitioned into the USAID/OFDA Haiti Program Office. The Program Office will continue to coordinate activities related to cholera response, earthquake recovery, and disaster preparedness.



Photo courtesy of Save the Children



Photo by Kendra Helmer, USAID

Partners that received USAID/OFDA funding for earthquake response projects have enhanced their water, sanitation, and hygiene activities in response to cholera, as shown at left. At right, a patient receives a USAID hygiene kit at the International Medical Corps cholera treatment center in Artibonite.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

FIU Program Seeks Candidates for USAID/OFDA-supported DRR Course

The DRR Program at Florida International University (FIU), with support from USAID/OFDA, is seeking candidates from Latin American universities for the upcoming fifth cycle of the graduate-level online course on comprehensive risk and disaster management, developed by the Universidad Politécnica de Cataluña International Center for Numerical Methods in Engineering (CIMNE).

FIU encourages university teachers or researchers involved in disaster risk management to apply for the course. The registration deadline is February 4. The two and a half month course begins in mid-March, and will be conducted in Spanish.

Students who successfully complete the course may be selected to participate in a field visit, or *pasantía*, to the city of Manizales, Colombia, to observe a living urban laboratory in which community leaders, city officials, and staff from the National University of Colombia, Manizales campus, work together to reduce multiple disaster risks and hazards.

For more information, e-mail DRR Program Co-Director Juan Pablo Sarmiento at Juan-Pablo.Sarmiento@fiu.edu.

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