



CENTRAL AMERICA – FLOODS

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- Since October 10, 2011, heavy rains associated with a tropical depression have caused flooding and landslides throughout Central America—including in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama—resulting in nearly 90 deaths and affecting an estimated 616,000 individuals to date.
- Rainfall is expected to decrease across most of Central America in the coming days with less than 1 inch of rain expected on October 21, according to national meteorological services throughout the region. Over the past week, an estimated 12 inches of rain fell over northwest El Salvador. Forecasts for October 20 predict less than 1 inch of rainfall across much of the region and up to 3 inches over central Honduras. On October 21 and 22, heavy rains are expected in Panama and Nicaragua where rainfall accumulations of more than 3 inches are possible.
- U.S. ambassadors in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras have declared disasters due to the flooding and landslides. In response, USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) has provided a total of \$250,000 for response activities and local procurement and distribution of emergency relief supplies in the region. The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) has also provided a total of \$80,000 for local procurement and distribution of emergency relief supplies in El Salvador and Honduras. Between October 12 and 19, USAID/OFDA activated assessment teams in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Panama to monitor conditions and conduct damage and needs assessments in affected areas. USAID/OFDA has staff on standby in Belize and Costa Rica to respond, if necessary.
- As of October 21, the governments of Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama had not requested international assistance.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

Country	Number Affected	Number Evacuated	Deaths	Source
Guatemala	Up to 275,000 ¹	17,417	34	GoG ² – October 20, 2011
El Salvador	150,000	51,673	32	GoES – October 19, 2011
Honduras	57,843	11,402	13	GoH ³ – October 19, 2011
Nicaragua	134,000	10,146	9	GoN ⁴ and CEPREDENAC ⁵ – October 19, 2011

TOTAL FY 2012 USAID/OFDA HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE CENTRAL AMERICA FLOODS

Total USAID/OFDA Assistance to Guatemala	\$50,000
Total USAID/OFDA Assistance to El Salvador	\$100,000
Total USAID/OFDA Assistance to Honduras	\$100,000
Total USAID/OFDA Assistance to Central America	\$250,000

TOTAL FY 2012 DoD HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE CENTRAL AMERICA FLOODS

Total DoD Assistance to El Salvador	\$60,000
Total DoD Assistance to Honduras	\$20,000
Total DoD Assistance to Central America	\$80,000

¹ Updated figures highlight only those affected by the floods as a result of Tropical Depression Twelve-E and do not include those affected by previous disasters, including recent earthquakes and other tropical storms.

² Government of Guatemala (GoG)

³ Government of Honduras (GoH)

⁴ Government of Nicaragua (GoN)

⁵ Central American Coordination Center for the Prevention of Disasters (CEPREDENAC)

Context

- To date in 2011, the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region has experienced 16 named storms during the Atlantic hurricane season, which lasts from June 1 to November 30. In recent months, above-average rainfall has exacerbated storm impacts in some areas, leading to floods and landslides.
- USAID/OFDA prioritizes preparedness and capacity building activities in the LAC region to enable rapid response to humanitarian needs as a result of storms and flooding. USAID/OFDA has pre-positioned emergency relief supplies in its warehouse in Miami, Florida, which are ready to be transported to Central America, if necessary. In addition, USAID/OFDA has agreements with air charter services in the region for the transportation of personnel and supplies, if required. USAID/OFDA maintains a network of locally-based staff throughout the region, including more than 20 Disaster Risk Management Specialists (DRMSes) and more than 300 surge capacity consultants, to provide technical assistance to national governments and assess disaster impacts, as necessary.

Guatemala

- Since October 10, 2011, sustained heavy rainfall associated with a tropical depression has caused flooding and landslides in the majority of Guatemala's departments, resulting in more than 30 deaths and affecting up to 275,000 people, according to the GoG National Emergency Response Commission (CONRED) on October 20. The flooding and landslides have damaged or threatened more than 18,000 houses and numerous roads and bridges, resulting in the evacuation of more than 17,000 people. An estimated 10,000 people are currently residing in more than 99 emergency shelters in Guatemala.
- While weather conditions have improved, high river levels and flooding continue in Petén, Alta Verapaz, and Baja Verapaz departments in northern and central Guatemala. The Guatemalan Meteorological Service anticipates rainfall to decrease in the northern, central, and coastal regions of the country, while moderate levels of rainfall are expected to continue in the south in the coming days.
- As of October 20, CONRED maintained a red alert for 19 of Guatemala's 22 departments. Emergency officials at the national emergency operations center (EOC) in Guatemala City and 21 department-level EOCs continue to monitor and respond to the effects of the floods and landslides.
- On October 15, Guatemala President Alvaro Colom declared a national state of calamity and requested humanitarian assistance in response to floods and landslides. CONRED is leading the GoG response and has mobilized approximately 315 metric tons (MT) of humanitarian assistance, of which more than 258 MT had been distributed to affected populations, as of October 20.
- On October 15, 2011, U.S. Ambassador Arnold A. Chacon declared a disaster due to the floods in Guatemala. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$50,000 through USAID/Guatemala to CONRED for local procurement of non-food emergency relief commodities, including chlorinated water, water filters, blankets, and fuel. On October 12, USAID/OFDA activated a seven-member assessment team in Guatemala, including a Guatemala-based DRMS and six local surge capacity consultants. Due to improving conditions, USAID/OFDA plans to begin demobilizing the team on October 21.
- The GoG plans to use more than 100 rolls of USAID/OFDA-pre-positioned plastic sheeting for the construction of temporary shelters for affected populations, along with framing materials and other building supplies purchased with funding from Taiwan. In addition, since October 15, helicopters from the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala City have assisted with aerial damage assessments, transported relief supplies, and conducted evacuations from affected areas.

El Salvador

- As of mid-October, heavy rainfall associated with a tropical depression has caused flooding and landslides throughout El Salvador, resulting in 32 deaths and affecting approximately 150,000 people, including more than 51,000 individuals currently residing in 585 emergency shelters, according to GoES. As of October 19, the floods and landslides had affected more than 19,000 houses, nearly 20 roads, numerous bridges, 36 schools, and more than 3,400 acres of cropland.
- On October 14, El Salvador President Mauricio Funes declared a state of national emergency and requested humanitarian assistance. GoES authorities are distributing relief supplies, including food rations, hygiene items, bedding, and clothing, to populations in emergency shelters. As of October 19, GoES officials had distributed 470 MT of relief items throughout El Salvador, according to CEPREDENAC.
- The GoES Civil Protection Agency is distributing nearly 3,000 USAID/OFDA-funded personal hygiene kits in La Paz, San Vicente, and Usulután departments. Each hygiene kit contains soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, laundry detergent, and other hygiene items—meeting the hygiene needs of a family of five for approximately two

weeks. USAID/OFDA is also coordinating the distribution of USAID/OFDA-funded toolkits, containing shovels, pickaxes, and mattocks, to community civil protection commissions in La Paz, Ahuachapán, and Usulután departments. In addition, nearly 100 boxes of pre-positioned USAID/OFDA plastic sheeting are available for the construction of temporary shelters, if needed.

- On October 16, 2011, U.S. Ambassador Mari Carmen Aponte declared a disaster due to the effects of the floods in El Salvador. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$100,000 through USAID/El Salvador to the GoES Civil Protection Agency for transportation support and local procurement of non-food emergency relief commodities, including hygiene kits, kitchen sets, and fuel. In addition, USAID/OFDA is providing emergency relief supplies—including 2,500 blankets, 10,000 water containers, 1,000 kitchen sets, 100 rolls of plastic sheeting, and 10,000 hygiene kits—from its warehouse in Miami to the GoES for distribution. To date, USAID/OFDA has activated an assessment team of nine, including an El Salvador-based USAID/OFDA DRMS, USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor, USAID/OFDA Response Specialist, and local USAID/OFDA surge capacity consultants, who continue to monitor conditions in the country.

Honduras

- As of mid-October, sustained heavy rainfall associated with a tropical depression had caused flooding and landslides throughout Honduras, resulting in 13 deaths and affecting nearly 58,000 people, according to the GoH Permanent Emergency Commission (COPECO). The floods and landslides have also affected nearly 9,000 acres of cropland and damaged more than 3,000 houses, nearly 120 stretches of road, and approximately 20 bridges. The primary road between Honduras' capital of Tegucigalpa and the south has become impassable due to the collapse of the roadway. More than 11,000 people have evacuated due to the flooding and landslides; more than 8,000 individuals currently reside in emergency shelters.
- On October 16, Honduras President Porfirio Lobo declared a state of national emergency in Honduras. COPECO is leading GoH response efforts, and, in collaboration with the U.N. World Food Program, has distributed approximately 17 MT of food rations to affected families, as of October 19. COPECO maintains a red alert for Choluteca and Valle departments and a yellow alert for Comayagua, La Paz, Intibucá, Lempira, Ocotepeque, Copan, Santa Bárbara, Cortés, Atlántida, Colón, Yoro, and Francisco Morazán departments.
- On October 17, 2011, U.S. Ambassador Lisa Kubiske declared a disaster due to the floods in Honduras. In response, USAID/OFDA provided a total of \$100,000 for child protection activities and local procurement and distribution of non-food emergency relief commodities, including hygiene kits, mattresses, blankets, and other relief supplies, to Save the Children (SC) and Plan International. A four-person USAID/OFDA assessment team—with additional surge capacity consultants on stand-by to deploy, if necessary—continues to monitor conditions in Honduras.
- On October 20, implementing partner Plan International began USAID/OFDA-supported psychological support and child protection activities in seven emergency shelters in Marcovia, Triunfo, and Namasigüe municipalities in Choluteca Department. In addition, since October 15, USAID/OFDA has worked with SC to distribute pre-positioned USAID/OFDA-funded non-food emergency relief commodities, including 1,025 hygiene kits, bedding for 677 people, and 600 kitchen sets, to flood-affected families in Valle and Choluteca departments. Since early October, USAID/OFDA partner World Vision has also been distributing pre-positioned hygiene kits to flood-affected families in Honduras.

Nicaragua

- As of mid-October, sustained heavy rainfall associated with a tropical depression has caused flooding and landslides throughout Nicaragua, resulting in nine deaths and the evacuation of more than 10,000 people who currently reside in more than 103 emergency shelters, according to GoN National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation, and Response (SINAPRED). The GoN also reported that flooding had affected or damaged more than 12,000 houses, as of October 17.
- On October 14, SINAPRED declared a yellow alert for Estelí, Chinandega, Madriz, Nueva Segovia, Jinotega, and Matagalpa departments. In addition, SINAPRED activated all department- and municipal-level EOCs and emergency response plans in these areas.
- On October 17, Nicaragua President Daniel Ortega declared a national state of calamity in Nicaragua due to the effects of the flooding and landslides. Nicaraguan authorities continue to monitor the water levels of Lake Managua, which are approaching historically high levels. Dangerously high water levels at Lake Managua could prompt the immediate evacuation of approximately 3,000 people, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

- A two-person USAID/OFDA assessment team in Nicaragua continues to monitor conditions in the country and coordinate response efforts with the GoN.
- The GoN had not requested international assistance, as of October 21.

Costa Rica

- As of October 18, heavy rainfall in Costa Rica displaced approximately 1,000 people, two-thirds of whom were residing in 17 emergency shelters, according to the Government of Costa Rica (GoCR) National Emergency Commission (CNE). Flooding and landslides have damaged dozens of roads and bridges, including portions of the Inter-American Highway north and south of San José, which remain impassable.
- Rains are expected to continue through October 21, according to the Costa Rican National Meteorological Service. As of October 20, the CNE maintained a yellow alert for Costa Rica’s Central Valley and the Pacific coast.
- USAID/OFDA staff in the LAC regional office in San José, Costa Rica, continue to work in coordination with the CNE and the U.S. Embassy in San José to evaluate flood-related damages and humanitarian needs. Two USAID/OFDA Costa Rica-based surge consultants remain on alert to assist, if required.
- Damage assessments remain ongoing; however, the GoCR had not requested international assistance, as of October 21.

Panama

- Heavy rainfall in Panama has led to overflowing rivers, mudslides, and damaged homes and bridges in the Chiriquí and Darien departments in Panama. Due to weather conditions and poor access to remote locations, a number of communities remain isolated and without access to emergency relief.
- On October 20, USAID/OFDA activated a three-person assessment team in Panama, including a DRMS and two local surge capacity consultants, to monitor conditions in the country.
- The Government of Panama has not requested international assistance, as of October 21.

FY 2012 USG⁶ HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR CENTRAL AMERICA FLOODS

Implementing Partner	Activity	Location	Amount
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO GUATEMALA¹			
GoH CONRED	Emergency Relief Supplies	Affected Areas	\$50,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO GUATEMALA			\$50,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO GUATEMALA			\$50,000

USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR¹			
GoES Civil Protection Agency	Emergency Relief Supplies	Affected Areas	\$100,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR			\$100,000
DoD ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR			
GoES Civil Protection Agency	Emergency Relief Supplies	Affected Areas	\$60,000
TOTAL DoD ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR			\$60,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA AND DoD ASSISTANCE TO EL SAVADOR			\$160,000

⁶ U.S. Government (USG)

USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO HONDURAS¹			
Plan International	Emergency Relief Supplies and Protection Activities	Affected Areas	\$50,000
SC	Emergency Relief Supplies and Protection Activities	Affected Areas	\$50,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO HONDURAS			\$100,000
DoD ASSISTANCE TO HONDURAS			
GoH	Emergency Relief Supplies	Affected Areas	\$20,000
TOTAL DoD ASSISTANCE TO HONDURAS			\$20,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA AND DoD ASSISTANCE TO HONDURAS			\$120,000

TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO CENTRAL AMERICA FOR FLOODS	
Total USAID/OFDA Assistance for Central America Floods	\$250,000
Total DoD Assistance for Central America Floods	\$80,000
TOTAL USG ASSISTANCE FOR CENTRAL AMERICA FLOODS	\$330,000

¹ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of October 21, 2011.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations.
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID: www.usaid.gov – Keyword: Donations
 - The Center for International Disaster Information: or (202) 821.1999.
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int.
 - A list of humanitarian organizations that accept cash donations for humanitarian relief efforts can be found at www.interaction.org.

USAID/OFDA bulletins appear on the USAID web site at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/