

**GTA 41-01-006**



**WORKING WITH  
THE OFFICE OF  
U.S. FOREIGN  
DISASTER  
ASSISTANCE**

**OCTOBER 2007**

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**HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**



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## **INTRODUCTION**

This guide is intended to assist Civil Affairs (CA) personnel and civil-military operations (CMO) staff to better understand the existing mechanisms through which the United States Government (USG) provides international humanitarian assistance (HA) and disaster relief (DR) and the role of military resources in a USG HA and DR operation.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is the USG agency that directs the development and operation of humanitarian assistance to beneficiaries in foreign nations through implementing partners, including the United Nations (UN), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and international organizations. By providing immediate humanitarian assistance, longer-term reconstruction, and development aid to disaster-affected populations, USAID transforms crisis situations into opportunities to promote peace, democracy, and economic growth.

The Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) is the primary office within USAID that facilitates and coordinates all non-food emergency assistance overseas. OFDA is located in USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA).

It is critical that all CA elements understand the role and capabilities of OFDA to enhance the supported commander's successful mission. In today's operational environment, interagency cooperation and coordination are vital to allowing the commander to make informed decisions to maximize success with minimum risk and economy of force.

This guide should be used in conjunction with Joint Publication (JP) 3-57, *Joint Civil-Military Operations*; JP 3-07.6, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Humanitarian Assistance*; Field Manual (FM) 3-05.40, *Civil Affairs Operations*; FM 3-05.401, *Civil Affairs Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*; Graphic Training Aid (GTA) 41-01-001, *Civil Affairs Planning and Execution Guide*; GTA 41-01-003, *Civil*

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*Affairs Foreign Humanitarian Assistance Planning Guide*; and applicable operation plans (OPLANs).

The proponent of this GTA is the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) in cooperation with OFDA's Operations Liaison Unit (OLU). Submit comments and recommended changes to Commander, USAJFKSWCS, ATTN: AOJK-DTD-CA, Fort Bragg, NC 28310-9610 or by e-mail to AOJK-DTD-CA@soc.mil.

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## **WHY PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE?**

The United States has a long history of extending a helping hand to those people in other countries struggling to make a better life, recovering from a disaster, or striving to live in a free and democratic country. U.S. foreign assistance has the twofold purpose of furthering America's foreign policy interests in expanding democracy and free markets while improving the lives of citizens of the developing world. This compassion stands as a hallmark of the United States around the world—and shows the world our true character as a nation and as a people.

USAID's history goes back to the Marshall Plan Reconstruction of Europe after World War II. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy signed into law the Foreign Assistance Act and created USAID by executive order, merging the different foreign assistance programs that were spread over many different federal agencies.

OFDA's origins followed two trigger events in 1963. On a state visit to Costa Rica in March 1963, President Kennedy personally witnessed the eruption of the Irazú volcano, which injured hundreds of people and left thousands of others homeless. In July 1963, an earthquake in Skopje, Yugoslavia, killed more than 1,000 people, destroyed significant parts of the Macedonian capital, and exposed the challenges that the USG faced in coordinating HA. Within the USG at that time, no agency existed that was capable of delivering timely HA. To address this gap, officials in Washington, D.C., created a central authority to coordinate disaster assistance. In 1964, USAID's Administrator David E. Bell appointed the first Foreign Disaster Relief Coordinator, whose office eventually became OFDA.

## **OFDA'S MANDATE AND SPECIAL AUTHORITIES**

OFDA's threefold mandate, which guides all funded activities, is to—

- Save lives.

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- Alleviate human suffering.
- Mitigate the economic and social impact of a disaster.

To accomplish this mandate, OFDA has a staff of approximately 240 personnel worldwide. From 2004 to 2005, OFDA's average annual budget was approximately \$520 million, which included approximately \$235.5 million in regular Congressional apportionments plus Congressional supplemental authorizations to respond to specific disasters. In FY 2006, OFDA responded to 74 disasters affecting more than 173 million people in 55 countries.

OFDA has the following authorizations that make the organization different from almost every other USG agency:

- *Notwithstanding Authority.* The Foreign Assistance Act, as amended, states that the President could provide disaster assistance to any foreign country, international organization, or NGO “*notwithstanding any other provision of this or any other Act*” (22 U.S. Code 2292 [b]). This authority has allowed OFDA to respond swiftly and proactively to the needs of disaster victims, bypassing the more time-consuming USAID procurement process to provide grants, contracts, and services to implementing partners within 24 hours of an event.
- *Borrowing Authority.* In 1981, Congress permitted OFDA to borrow up to \$50 million annually from other USAID accounts. This authority has allowed OFDA to respond to an international disaster with more money than what it has in its accounts. OFDA uses this authority sparingly so as to avoid disagreement with other offices. OFDA may also elect to repay the borrowed funds.



## HOW IS OFDA ORGANIZED?

OFDA is one of eight offices in DCHA. DCHA is one of seven bureaus in USAID. Figure 1, page 6, shows OFDA's organization. OFDA consists of the following divisions, under the Office of the Director:

- The *Disaster Response and Mitigation (DRM) Division* coordinates the funding of HA and emergency relief activities. It consists of a technical assistance group (TAG) and five regional teams—East and Central Africa (ECA); Southern, West, and North Africa (SWAN); Europe, Middle East, and Central Asia (EMCA); Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean (Asia/LAC); and Sudan. Figure 2, page 7, shows how OFDA's regional coverage corresponds to the various combatant commands (COCOMs). The DRM Division also includes a strategic resources team (SRT) that covers functional areas, such as operational and contingency planning, monitoring and evaluation, information coordination, and geographic information.
- The *Operations (OPS) Division* develops and manages logistical, operational, and technical support for field offices and disaster response, including urban search and rescue (USAR) teams, disaster assistance response teams (DARTs), and response management teams (RMTs). The Operations Division also includes the OLU that coordinates with the U.S. military during HA/DR operations.
- The *Program Support (PS) Division* provides programmatic and administrative support, including budget and financial services, procurement planning, contracts and grants administration, information technology, communications support, and information services.

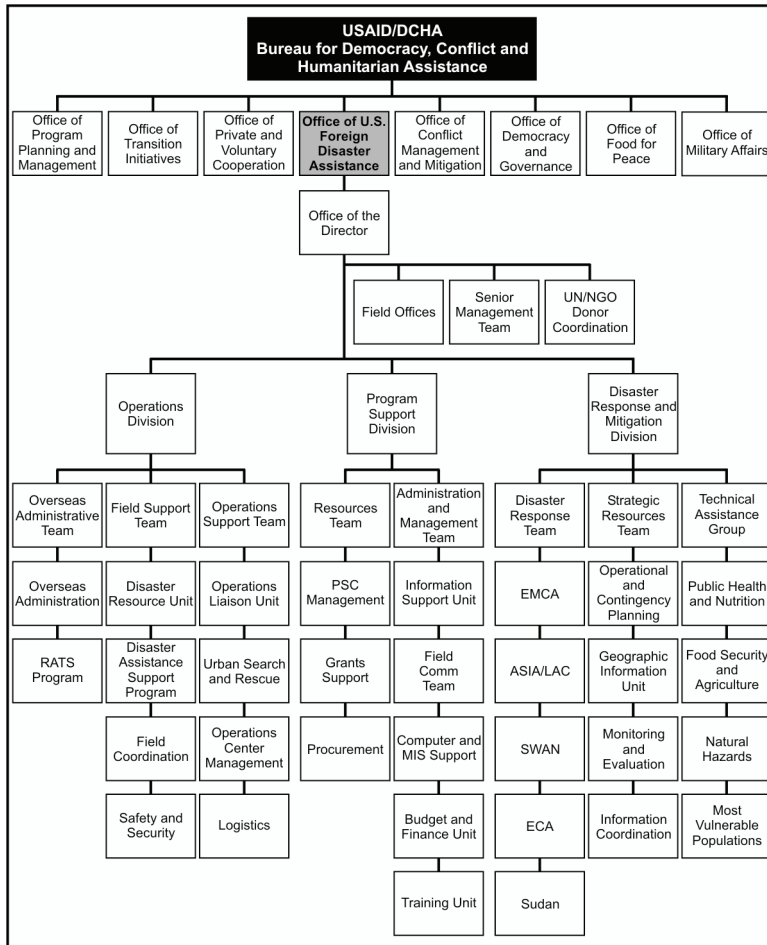


Figure 1. USAID/OFDA organization

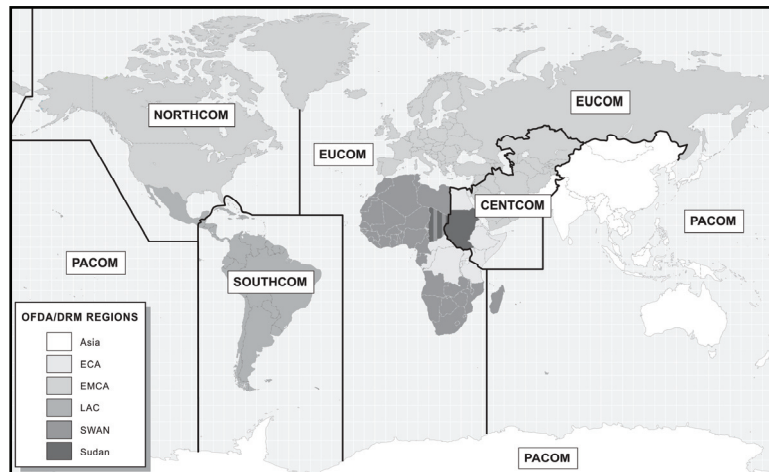


Figure 2. COCOMs and OFDA regions

## TO WHAT DISASTERS DOES OFDA RESPOND?

From 1997 to 2006, OFDA responded to between 50 and 80 international disasters annually. OFDA annual reports provide specific information about past OFDA responses. These reports are available at the following URL: [http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/disaster\\_assistance/](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/)

The disasters to which OFDA responds fall into the following categories:

- *Rapid-Onset Natural Disasters.* These disasters occur with minimal advance warning and often cause immediate catastrophic damage. Rapid-onset disasters include earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, hurricanes, cyclones, and floods, and require immediate provision of life-saving assistance. The impact of rapid-onset natural disasters can often be reduced

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with preparation and mitigation activities, such as volcano monitoring, flood mapping, and accurate weather forecasting.

- *Slow-Onset Natural Disasters.* These are disasters where multiple hazards and factors over a period of time begin to threaten the lives and livelihoods of affected populations. For example, a combination of poor rains, endemic poverty, and failing markets can often lead to widespread food insecurity and a nutrition emergency. Slow-onset natural disasters include drought and food insecurity.
- *Complex Emergencies.* Complex emergencies result from a combination of war, human displacement, and life-threatening insecurity.
- *Other Emergencies.* OFDA also provides assistance when lives or livelihoods are threatened by disasters arising from acts of terrorism and industrial accidents.

Figure 3, page 9, depicts the number of different kinds of disasters to which OFDA responded in FY 2006.

OFDA preparedness and mitigation activities occur in every region where OFDA works. The Regional Disaster Assistance Program (RDAP) in LAC is an example of an OFDA mitigation activity. From 1989 to 2006, RDAP trained 43,000 participants from 26 countries in emergency coordination activities and preparation of local, departmental, and national emergency action plans. Other examples include the promotion of seismically-resistant construction in South Asia and support for cyclone and flood early warning.

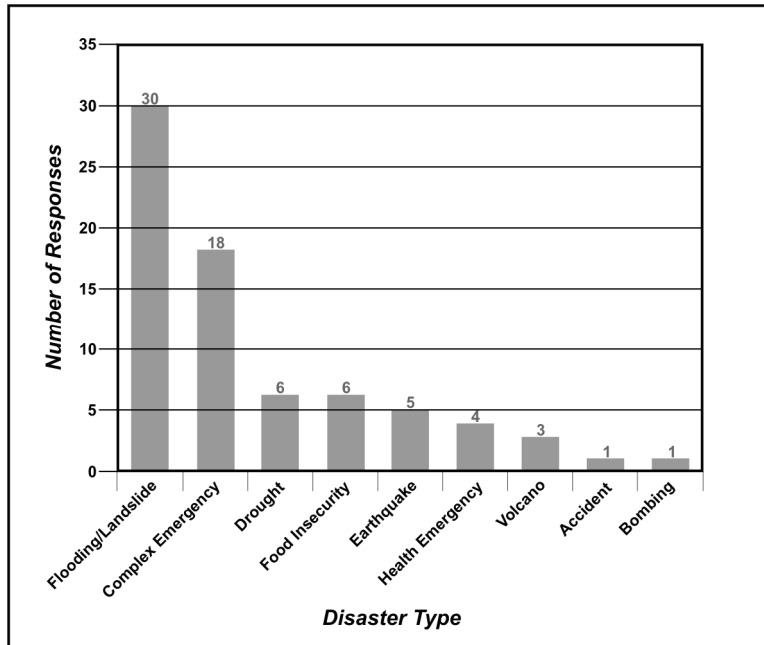


Figure 3. Types of OFDA disaster responses

### HOW DOES OFDA RESPOND TO A DISASTER?

OFDA is the USG's primary initial response office for natural disasters and complex emergencies. OFDA also develops, funds, and monitors rehabilitation and disaster mitigation programs. It also participates in the transition from relief to reconstruction or development assistance. The following paragraphs explain how OFDA responds to various types of devastation.

## **Disaster Declarations**

The primary responsibility for disaster relief rests with the government of the affected country. OFDA responds only when the U.S. Ambassador or Chief of Mission in an affected country has declared a disaster based on the following criteria:

- The magnitude of the disaster exceeds the affected country's capacity to respond.
- The affected country has requested or is willing to accept USG assistance.
- It is in the interest of the USG to provide assistance.

For countries where the USG has no diplomatic or official presence, the Assistant Secretary of State for that region issues a disaster declaration.

OFDA's assistance is intended to supplement and support the response, preparedness, and mitigation efforts of the government of the affected country. The U.S. Chief of Mission ensures that USG assistance is appropriate and based on priority humanitarian needs. OFDA coordinates closely with the U.S. Embassy or USAID Mission in the affected country to determine if and when USG humanitarian assistance may be appropriate.

When a rapid-onset disaster occurs, OFDA's duty officer in Washington, D.C., is alerted, and OFDA personnel are placed on stand-by to respond. The duty officer holds a rotating position shared among staff at OFDA headquarters in Washington, D.C. (OFDA/W). Based on consultations among senior management, regional staff, and other USG agencies, OFDA determines the scope of OFDA's response.

In the case of complex humanitarian emergencies, such as conflict or food insecurity, OFDA's staff closely monitors the humanitarian situation to determine timing for an effective response. If conditions warrant, OFDA disaster experts deploy to further assess the humanitarian situation and determine priority needs.

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In most disaster responses, OFDA coordinates closely with local and international organizations that are present in the disaster area and provides financial and technical support to local branches of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), NGOs, and various UN agencies.

### **Technical Assistance**

In addition to the five regional teams, OFDA has a TAG that advises on sector needs and reviews proposals to ensure that planned projects respond appropriately to disaster-affected populations. TAG experts include food security specialists, health experts, protection and vulnerable population advisors, and natural-hazard experts. TAG members are a vital resource for the regional teams, providing expert advice on numerous issues such as potentially threatening hurricanes, sanitation systems in internally displaced person (IDP) camps, nutrition surveys, aerial spraying for locusts, and livelihoods. Due to the nature of their work, TAG members conduct frequent field assessments in vulnerable areas and are often key members of assessment and response teams.

To ensure that the response is appropriate, timely, and cost effective, OFDA provides technical assistance through damage and needs assessments. That initial technical assistance may come in the form of an OFDA assessment team whose objectives are to—

- Assess the scope of the disaster's damage.
- Assess the initial needs of victims.
- Identify other relief organizations on the ground.
- Report to the Chief of Mission and OFDA/W on the situation and needs.
- Recommend follow-up USG relief actions, if any.

## **Regional Advisors, Field Staff, and Mission Disaster Relief Officers**

In addition to the Washington-based staff, OFDA has numerous on-the-ground assets that are used to respond quickly to disasters. To facilitate a rapid response, OFDA maintains regional advisors (RAs) in Costa Rica, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, and Nepal who can deploy quickly to affected locations. Additional OFDA field-based staff maintain a full-time presence in countries where humanitarian needs require vigilant monitoring, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

RAs provide ongoing monitoring of OFDA-funded activities and work closely with the in-country humanitarian community. RAs and program staff also maintain relationships with local government disaster response officials as well as with mission disaster relief officers (MDROs), who liaise between OFDA and the U.S. Embassy or USAID Mission. (In countries with a USAID presence, the MDRO position is usually a USAID staff member.)

In a U.S. Embassy or USAID Mission, the MDRO coordinates the embassy's disaster response efforts, and prepares and maintains the mission disaster relief plan (MDRP). The MDRO ensures that mission personnel are familiar with the MDRP's contents, liaises with government disaster authorities on an ongoing basis to ensure familiarity with disaster risks and organizational response capacities or arrangements, serves as the chief operating officer for the post's Emergency Action Committee (EAC) during all phases of the disaster, and acts as the post's coordinator of USG in-country disaster relief operations.

## **DART and RMT**

If a large-scale, urgent, or extended response is necessary, OFDA deploys a DART that provides specialists trained in a variety of disaster relief skills to assist the U.S. Chief of Mission and the USAID Mission



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(where present) with the management of the USG response to a disaster. As with an assessment team, DARTs assess and report on the disaster situation and recommend follow-up actions. DARTs are the most visible form of a USG response and also the least-used response option due to the high cost of deploying them.

Upon arrival, team specialists in areas such as water and sanitation, health, nutrition, shelter, agriculture, livestock, or protection conduct rapid assessments. Administrative, communications, and information officers work to support assessment teams by relaying information on urgent needs and recommendations to Washington, D.C. When necessary, members of U.S.-based USAR teams from Los Angeles County, California, and Fairfax County, Virginia, deploy as part of the DART.

In the event of an impending disaster, OFDA may pre-position personnel and relief supplies to provide immediate assistance and conduct humanitarian assessments, which are crucial in providing policymakers with the ability to respond quickly and accurately to identified needs.

In countries of operation, DARTs can engage in the following activities:

- Establish an operational presence on the ground, capable of carrying out sustained response activities.
- Develop and, upon approval, implement OFDA's field response strategy based on the DART mission objectives.
- Coordinate the movement and consignment of USG relief commodities.
- Coordinate USG relief efforts with the affected country, other donor countries, and relief organizations.
- Fund relief organizations (when acting as the funding authority).
- Monitor and evaluate USG-funded relief activities.
- Liaise with the U.S. military in the event of DOD involvement in a large disaster response.

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To ensure coordination of USG disaster relief efforts, the DART leader reports to the U.S. Chief of Mission (or his designee), who is the lead USG person in the affected country. The DART leader also reports to OFDA/W to ensure that OFDA's mandate and mission are being carried out effectively and efficiently.

To provide necessary support to a DART, the OFDA Director may decide to activate an OFDA/W response management team (RMT). The OFDA Director, through the RMT, coordinates the USG response to a disaster from OFDA/W. The RMT serves as the primary liaison between field disaster response and OFDA/W.

When an RMT is activated, decision making, coordination, and the primary point of contact for DARTs or other resources deployed in the field moves from the OFDA regional team to the RMT (until these responsibilities are returned to the OFDA Director). Representing USAID, the RMT oversees Washington-based support for a disaster response, providing interagency coordination of relief activities and supporting DART field operations. During regional responses to disasters affecting more than one country, such as the Indian Ocean tsunami or the Sahel locust emergency, one RMT may support DART members in several countries.

### **Provision of Emergency Relief Supplies**

In response to requests from staff on the ground, an OFDA logistics officer in Washington, D.C., organizes bids with shipping companies to deliver relief supplies, such as plastic sheeting, water containers and purification units, blankets, and health supplies, from one of OFDA's regional warehouses. The bulk of OFDA relief supplies are transported via commercial aircraft.

OFDA maintains three forward-deployed warehouses containing emergency relief supplies in Miami, Florida; Dubai, United Arab Emirates; and Pisa, Italy. A logistics officer on the ground ensures that these supplies reach implementing partners for distribution to affected residents.

## **Funding of Emergency Relief Activities**

OFDA's most frequent response to a disaster is to provide financial assistance to humanitarian organizations. Following a disaster declaration by the U.S. Ambassador, Chief of Mission, or appropriate Assistant Secretary of State, OFDA immediately provides up to \$50,000—the Disaster Assistance Authority—to the U.S. Embassy or USAID Mission in the affected country for the local purchase of relief supplies or as a contribution to a relief organization.

The first principles in disaster response accountability are to ensure that assistance does no harm to disaster-affected people and is appropriately delivered to the affected populations in time to save lives and alleviate human suffering.

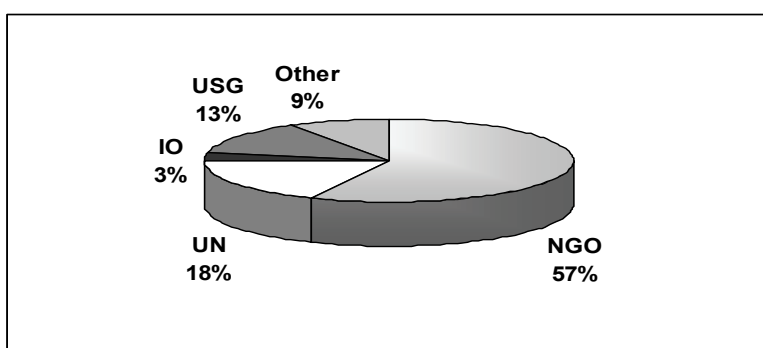
Based on the scope of the disaster, recommendations from the field, and needs of affected populations, OFDA may provide humanitarian organizations with additional funding for specific activities. OFDA activities are intended to provide immediate life-saving assistance. Funded activities usually last from a few weeks up to 1 year. By registering with USAID before a disaster, many implementing partners are able to receive funds in less than 24 hours.

Program officers in Washington may also review and recommend funding for international emergency appeals, such as the flash appeal for the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami or the 2006 UN Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) for Kenya.

The CAP is a field-based coordination mechanism used by aid organizations to plan, coordinate, fund, implement, and monitor their activities. According to the UN, the CAP provides a framework for aid agencies to analyze the context in which humanitarian action takes place, consider scenarios, assess needs, agree on priorities, set goals, draw up a Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) to address them, monitor the strategy, and revise it as necessary.

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Although the majority of organizations receiving OFDA assistance are NGOs, a sizeable portion of funding is awarded to UN agencies and other international organizations. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of OFDA's FY 2006 activities by type of recipient organization.



**Figure 4. Funding by agency type (FY 2006)**

*Note:* Chart is based on the total OFDA funding for disaster response and mitigation in FY 2006 of \$502.8 million, which included supplemental appropriations. *USG* denotes the portion of assistance provided through agreements with other USG agencies.

### **EMERGENCY RELIEF SECTORS**

In addition to conducting assessments of affected areas, DART members and RAs carefully monitor implementing partners to ensure that resources are used wisely and to determine if projects need to be adapted to changing conditions. For example, although an implementing partner may originally be funded to respond in one location, a new influx of IDPs elsewhere may require USAID authorization to expand operations in order to respond. OFDA supports emergency relief activities that fall into the sectors discussed below.

## **Health**

OFDA supports emergency health interventions that are based on strategies with the highest public health impact for the majority of those affected. Health interventions emphasize community-based initiatives that address major causes of death and disability. Such programs are designed to help prevent and treat malaria, measles, diarrhea, acute respiratory tract infections, and malnutrition. OFDA programs increase pregnant women's access to safe deliveries and provide education on caring for a newborn. OFDA health activities are coordinated with local governments and implementing partner health strategies.

## **Agriculture and Food Security**

Emergency agriculture and food security initiatives address the immediate needs of target populations and strengthen local capacity and resilience to disasters. OFDA supports agriculture and food security activities that expand choices available to farmers. OFDA also funds the improvement of seed assessment methodology, provides assistance for emergency pest and pesticide management and disposal, and encourages the multiplication and dissemination of disease-resistant crop varieties.

## **Economy and Market Systems**

In the wake of disaster, OFDA focuses on supporting programs that contribute to the longer-term economic recovery of a region by assisting people to resume their livelihoods. Such programs seek to restore livelihood assets, provide grants to support small business development, and create employment opportunities for people affected by disaster. Economic recovery is a vital part of the longer-term rehabilitation of a community following disaster and an integral piece of a holistic, comprehensive disaster response program.

## **Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management**

In any humanitarian response, coordination and information management are essential elements for the delivery of humanitarian assistance in a cohesive and effective manner. Through UN and NGO partners, OFDA provides funding to enhance international and local coordination mechanisms, such as a Humanitarian Information Center (HIC). OFDA also supports activities to strengthen the coordination and information management infrastructure of the international humanitarian community as a whole.

## **Protection of IDPs and Vulnerable Populations**

Protection activities assist IDPs and other vulnerable populations in reducing or managing risks associated with violence, abuse, harassment, and exploitation. OFDA strongly encourages implementing partners to mainstream protection considerations into the design, implementation, and evaluation of assistance programs wherever possible and appropriate. Since 2005, OFDA has also funded protection of vulnerable populations as a stand-alone humanitarian sector.

## **Shelter and Settlements**

In the wake of a major disaster that damages and destroys homes, OFDA provides shelter and settlement assistance to address both immediate needs and overall recovery and reconstruction. Where possible and appropriate, shelter interventions promote livelihood opportunities, and support and sustain local coping mechanisms. Program design emphasizes separate spaces for women and children, use of local building materials, reuse of rubble, and basic site planning to provide privacy and dignity. OFDA emergency shelter programs are socially and culturally appropriate, promote economic recovery, and reduce the vulnerability of at-risk populations.

### **Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene**

In disaster-affected areas, OFDA funds water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) interventions, such as the construction of wells and latrines and the promotion of hand washing, safe water usage, and healthy sanitation. To ensure sustainable programs, OFDA links emergency activities with transition and development programs and incorporates institutional partners, such as local governments in program planning and implementation. Through WASH programming, OFDA helps reduce morbidity and mortality associated with water and sanitation diseases and poor environmental conditions.

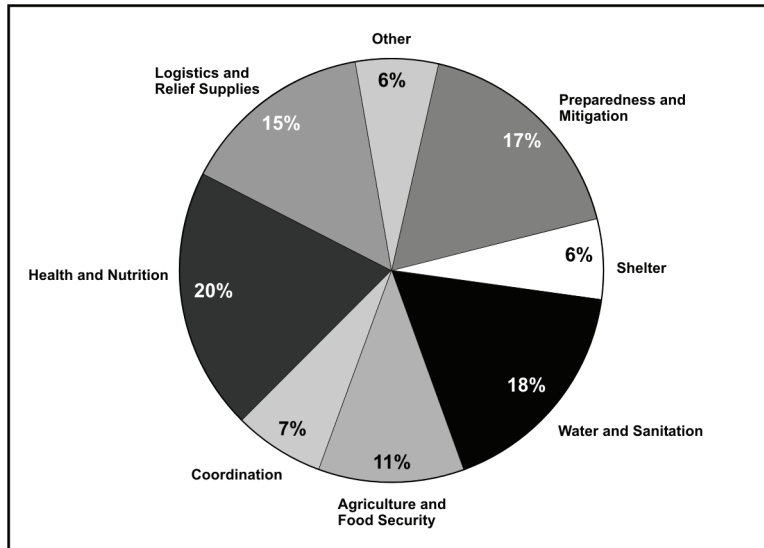
### **Nutrition**

OFDA supports emergency nutrition programs that focus on the prevention and treatment of moderate and severe acute malnutrition. Programs funded by OFDA use evidence-based approaches that decrease morbidity and mortality from malnutrition and from health conditions exacerbated by malnutrition. OFDA supports activities that are community-based and linked to local health systems.

Using FY 2006 as an example, Figure 5, page 20, breaks down OFDA's humanitarian assistance by sector funded.

### **Risk Reduction (Natural and Technological Disasters)**

OFDA funds activities to reduce local populations' risks and vulnerabilities to natural hazards, such as earthquakes, volcanoes, cyclones, and drought. OFDA also supports specific preparedness programs that increase local disaster-response capacity. OFDA works with local, regional, and national governments, as well as with international and regional organizations, NGOs, and local communities, to foster multisectoral linkages between activities.



**Figure 5. OFDA assistance by sector**

### **Logistics and Relief Commodities**

To ensure that disaster-affected populations receive sufficient relief supplies, OFDA provides and delivers warehoused commodities and also funds implementing partners to procure relief supplies locally. OFDA distributes humanitarian commodities based on detailed needs assessments, often in coordination with other donors and NGOs.

### **Cross-Cutting Themes**

Cross-cutting themes refer to a range of activities and topics that are frequently part of larger sectoral programs. Figure 6, page 21, lists examples of cross-cutting themes.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information systems and geographic information systems.</li> <li>- Infrastructure rehabilitation.</li> <li>- Livelihoods or income generation.</li> <li>- Market rehabilitation.</li> <li>- Microfinance or microcredit.</li> <li>- Nomads/pastoralists activities.</li> <li>- Humanitarian protection mainstreaming.</li> <li>- Activities to assist returnees.</li> <li>- Antislavery and trafficking activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vector control.</li> <li>- Livelihood vouchers.</li> <li>- Artisanal production.</li> <li>- Capacity building and training.</li> <li>- Cash distribution/cash for work.</li> <li>- Programs focusing on children.</li> <li>- Conflict resolution.</li> <li>- Gender relations.</li> <li>- HIV/AIDS.</li> <li>- Host community projects.</li> <li>- Host government activities.</li> <li>- Internally displaced persons.</li> </ul>
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**Figure 6. Cross-cutting themes**

**OTHER USG OFFICES THAT SUPPORT HA/DR**

Although OFDA is the chief USG responder to international disasters and crises, the office coordinates assistance with other parts of USAID, as well as other USG agencies and donors. The following offices within USAID/DCHA also support HA/DR activities:

- *USAID's Office of Food for Peace (FFP)*. FFP is the primary means by which the United States donates food quickly to those people who have immediate needs because of natural or man-made disasters. FFP provides food commodities to implementing partners to address both emergency food needs and food security development activities. Agricultural goods provided by FFP can also be sold or exchanged to help rural communities learn how to produce enough food to meet their own needs, and to teach these communities about nutrition and health.

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- *USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)*. OTI's assistance should facilitate the transition from crisis and conflict to peace and stability. Examples of activities include aiding in the demobilization of combatants and developing democratic governance and media structures within conflict-affected countries.
- *USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM)*. CMM supports early responses to address the causes and consequences of instability and conflict and seeks to integrate conflict mitigation and management into USAID's programs.
- *USAID's Office of Military Affairs (OMA)*. Established in 2005, OMA is the focal point for strategic-level USAID interaction with the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). OMA builds effective working relationships with DOD, including maintaining emergency response readiness; coordinating planning; and developing joint training, education, and exercises.

Several offices within the U.S. Department of State (DOS) also contribute significantly to disaster responses. They are—

- *The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM)*. 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 Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross.
- *The Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (CRS)*. State/CRS works to lead, coordinate, and institutionalize USG civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for postconflict situations, and to help stabilize and reconstruct societies in transition from conflict or civil strife.

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In addition, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), in coordination with USAID/FFP, provides food assistance to support emergency feeding programs in countries experiencing food shortages due to drought and civil conflict.

The U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the USDA Forest Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency also provide technical assistance, in coordination with OFDA, in response to disasters and potential hazards overseas.

To ensure constant USG coordination, representatives from the offices mentioned above frequently participate on DARTs and RMTs, and often collaborate with OFDA on follow-up assessment missions. OFDA also maintains communication with UN agencies, international organizations, and other donors to make sure the USG complements rather than duplicates other international assistance.

### **HOW OFDA WORKS WITH THE U.S. MILITARY**

For the U.S. military to become involved in a humanitarian assistance operation, a special set of conditions apply. When lives are in immediate danger and the combatant command is in a position to render timely life-saving assistance, a military commander has the authority to act independently to render immediate aid. However, reimbursement of these operational expenses is not assured. Outside this immediate situation, any response from the DOD is part of a comprehensive USG approach in which OFDA is the lead agency.

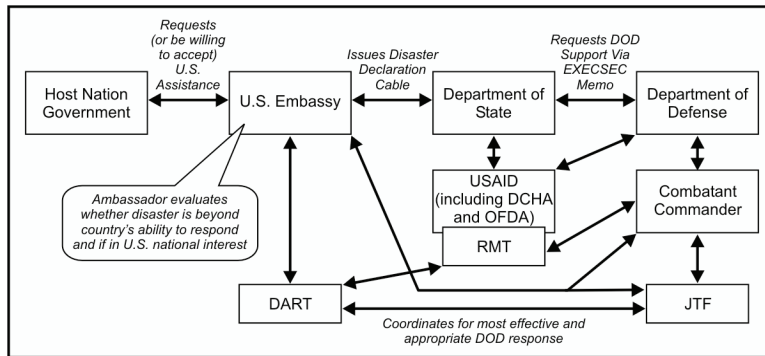
### **Official Request for DOD Assistance**

As outlined in an Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) message, a request for DOD assistance is transmitted in an official Executive Secretary (EXECSEC) memorandum from the DOS to DOD (Figure 7, page 24). This memorandum preserves visibility and decision-making authority for OSD on the policy and use of DOD assets and personnel.

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It also helps ensure that any request for assistance has been vetted and validated through senior management at USAID and the State Department. The EXECSEC process ensures that, based on the assessed needs and suggested responses, DOD is particularly well-suited to respond to the disaster. The official memorandum also allows humanitarian assistance managers in OSD to review the request against other demands for limited DOD HA/DR resources.



**Figure 7. Interagency coordination flow when OFDA and DOD respond**

### Contacting OFDA Representatives

OFDA’s OLU is the focal point for tactical U.S. military coordination during disaster responses and HA/DR operations. To contact the OLU, e-mail [OLU@usaid.gov](mailto:OLU@usaid.gov). At a tactical level, the OLU is the best resource for CA officers since OLU staff will have the most up-to-date information on how OFDA responds to a particular disaster event and how CA officers can tie in with OFDA or other USG representatives on the ground. (For larger operational and strategic coordination, OMA is the appropriate contact within USAID.) Due to the need for rapid and efficient communication with a wide variety of partners, OFDA primarily uses unclassified e-mail and communication systems.

### **Exchanging Liaison Officers**

In the event of U.S. military involvement in a large disaster response, DOD and USAID will exchange liaison officers. A USAID staff member will deploy to the field-based joint task force (JTF), the joint staff, the affected COCOM headquarters, and a military liaison officer will join USAID staff in a Washington-based RMT or a field-based DART. The liaison officers convey assessments, resource requirements, current operations status, and future plans for relief operations.

### **U.S. Military Support During an HA/DR Mission**

As the lead U.S. federal agency for international disaster response, OFDA's role during disaster operations involving the U.S. military is to coordinate military support based on assessed needs and requirements in the disaster-affected area. This support involves working with all actors in the field environment, including USG offices, NGOs, international organizations, and UN agencies.

If required, Civil Affairs capacity can include the establishing of a civil-military operations center (CMOC) to help coordinate on-the-ground U.S. military requirements. The CMOC includes robust computer, communication, and information capabilities. Civil Affairs teams (CATs) are trained and able to conduct assessments in remote or insecure areas.

During a disaster response involving both OFDA and U.S. military assets, OFDA appreciates unclassified map and information sharing, which allows OFDA to plan responses and allocate resources more effectively.

In previous disaster responses, examples of support requested from the U.S. military included:

- Heavy- and medium-lift helicopter support.
- Cargo handling.

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- Security briefings and information sharing.
- Assessment facilitation.
- Access to remote areas.
- Assistance with opening sea and air ports.
- Assistance with liaising with host or other nations' military.

### **Examples of U.S. Military Support**

In FY 2006, U.S. military assets were incorporated into the USG responses to the following disasters:

- Pakistan earthquake.
- Indonesia earthquake.
- Philippines landslides.
- Guatemala flooding.
- Complex emergency in Lebanon.
- Volcano eruption in Ecuador.
- Methanol poisoning in Guatemala.

JTFs conducting HA/DR operations may be designated by unique titles. For example, for the Indian Ocean tsunami response, the JTF was called COMBINED SUPPORT FORCE 536 (CSF-536), and for the Pakistan earthquake in October 2005, the JTF was referred to as the U.S. DISASTER ASSISTANCE CENTER (DAC-PAK).

### **OFDA Resources for CA Planners**

OFDA has numerous resources that can assist the CA community in responding more effectively, to include—

- *Information Reports*. In many USG disaster responses, OFDA publishes both public and internal situation updates of ongoing USG activities in the region and humanitarian developments. The populace can contact the OLU to be added to the distribution list to receive these updates. In addition, military

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CA officers may provide updates through the OLU about ongoing military assistance.

- *Sector-Specific Standards and Guidance:* Although the implementation of an FHA activity, such as the construction of a well or rehabilitation of a clinic, may bring immediate short-term benefits to a particular community and win local hearts and minds, the longer-term affects of such activities might be detrimental to local families. OFDA works closely with technical experts across the humanitarian community to stay current with local trends and developments. This sector-specific guidance is available at [www.usaid.gov/our\\_work](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work) or e-mail the OLU.
- *Liaison During Operations.* Some NGOs work more easily with the U.S. military than others depending on the organization's particular philosophy and outlook. Some NGOs have expressed concern that the military tries to dominate the humanitarian response. Other NGOs fear compromising their core values of impartiality and neutrality or that their presence will be misused to collect intelligence. Through the DART in general and OFDA's OLU in particular, OFDA aims to de-conflict and bridge the gap between international organizations, NGOs, and the U.S. military to cooperate in disaster relief operations. Following the disaster response phase, other DCHA offices, including OMA, are able to assist the U.S. military in working with NGOs and other humanitarian agencies.
- *Joint Training Capacity.* Through its Joint Humanitarian Operations Course (JHOC), OFDA has created a training seminar in how OFDA works and organizes in a disaster response. Using case studies from previous responses and a combination of lectures and group activities, the JHOC is an excellent resource for military CA responders. In addition, OFDA's staff regularly participates in U.S. military training

exercises, seminars, and conferences. CA personnel can find out more information or arrange for a JHOC by e-mailing the OLU at [olu@usaid.gov](mailto:olu@usaid.gov).

### **Recommended DOD Assistance in HA/DR**

With its acknowledged ability to deploy assets rapidly, the U.S. military is in a valuable position to provide significant transportation and logistics, personnel, and communication assistance to disaster responders. However, because the U.S. military is uniquely situated to move large assets for combat operations, OFDA generally recommends that, where activated, DOD assets be used in a “wholesale” capacity, supporting smaller and more agile implementing partners, UN agencies, and NGOs who deliver the actual “retail” assistance to beneficiaries and work hands-on with affected populations.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Information about USAID and OFDA can also be found at [www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/disaster\\_assistance/](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/). This Web site contains links to all OFDA’s public information products connected to various disaster responses. They include—

- *Situation Reports*. These summary documents outline the latest developments in an unfolding complex emergency and detail USG response activities. Each situation report (SITREP) includes a detailed funding chart describing how much money the USG has provided to implementing partners.
- *Fact Sheets*. These summary documents outline the latest developments in a rapidly changing humanitarian emergency or natural disaster and the USG response. Each fact sheet includes a detailed funding chart describing how much money the USG has provided to implementing partners.



- *Program Maps.* These maps often accompany SITREPs and fact sheets. They are produced by OFDA's geographic information unit and depict the disaster-affected area together with the responding organizations that USAID funds.
- *Annual Reports.* OFDA's annual report summarizes each of the disaster responses and OFDA activities over the fiscal year. Annual reports also include detailed financial tables, feature articles highlighting aspects of specific responses, and additional information about the delivery of USG humanitarian assistance.
- *Guidelines for Unsolicited Proposals and Reporting.* The OFDA guidelines for unsolicited proposals and reporting assist organizations in the preparation of proposals for new awards and award modifications and their submission to OFDA. The manual lays out considerations relevant to the proposal review and award process, and outlines the main components of an unsolicited proposal.

### **OFDA Guidance Cable**

OFDA issues an annual unclassified cable that provides general guidance to all posts concerning support from OFDA before, during, and after the occurrence of natural and man-made disasters. The most recent guidance cable can be obtained by e-mailing [olu@usaid.gov](mailto:olu@usaid.gov).

### **Field Operations Guide (FOG)**

The FOG for disaster assessment and response was developed by OFDA as a reference tool for individuals sent to disaster sites to undertake initial assessments or to participate as members of a DART. The FOG contains information on general responsibilities for disaster responders, formats and reference material for assessing and reporting on populations at risk, DART position descriptions and duty checklists, descriptions of OFDA stockpile commodities, general information

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related to disaster activities, information on working with the military in the field, and a glossary of acronyms and terms used by OFDA and other organizations with which OFDA works. The FOG is available online at [http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/disaster\\_assistance/resources/pdf/fog\\_v4.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/resources/pdf/fog_v4.pdf).

### **Relief Web**

Launched in 1996, Relief Web ([www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)) provides timely, reliable, and relevant humanitarian information to assist the international humanitarian community in effective delivery of emergency assistance. This site is managed by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Relief Web posts numerous maps and documents daily from more than 2,000 sources from within the UN system and from governments, NGOs, academia, and the media. It also has a map center and sections that offer updates on appeals and funding, policies and issues, and professional resources.

### **The Center for International Disaster Information (CIDI)**

Since 1988, CIDI has handled hundreds of thousands of public inquiries related to international emergencies. The center strives to educate the public on how to respond in a useful and productive manner to international emergencies. Its *Guidelines for Making In-Kind Donations* have been adopted in some form by nearly every key player in the international donations management arena.

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## Acronyms and Frequently Used Terms

The following list contains acronyms and terms that are frequently used by USAID and other humanitarian agencies. Some terms are familiar to the U.S. military whereas others are unique to the humanitarian community.

<b>ARI</b>	acute respiratory infection
<b>ATA</b>	actual time of arrival
<b>ATD</b>	actual time of departure
<b>at-risk population</b>	A group that may suffer the effects of drought, conflict, food insecurity, or other phenomena resulting in humanitarian hardship.
<b>AU</b>	<b>African Union.</b> An organization, composed of 53 member states, whose aim is to promote peace, security, and solidarity on the African continent.
<b>blended foods</b>	Fortified/processed foods such as wheat-soya blend, corn-soya blend, and soya-fortified bulgur.
<b>BOO</b>	base of operations
<b>CAP</b>	Consolidated Appeals Process
<b>CAT</b>	Civil Affairs team
<b>CDC</b>	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<b>CHAP</b>	Common Humanitarian Action Plan
<b>CIDA</b>	Canadian International Development Agency
<b>CIDI</b>	<b>Center for International Disaster Information.</b> USAID-funded clearinghouse for public donations and volunteer information during overseas disasters.

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<b>CMM</b>	Conflict Management and Mitigation
<b>CMOC</b>	civil-military operations center
<b>COCOM</b>	combatant command
<b>Cold Chain</b>	The refrigerated transportation system for vaccines from the manufacturer to the individual.
<b>COM</b>	Chief of Mission
<b>Country Team</b>	The senior, in-country U.S. coordinating and supervising body, headed by the Chief of the U.S. diplomatic mission.
<b>CRS</b>	Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization
<b>CSB</b>	corn-soya blend
<b>CTC</b>	community-based therapeutic care
<b>DART</b>	disaster assistance response team
<b>DASP</b>	Disaster Assistance Support Program based at the USDA Forest Service
<b>DCHA</b>	Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance
<b>DCM</b>	Deputy Chief of Mission
<b>DFID</b>	British Department for International Development
<b>DOD</b>	Department of Defense
<b>DOS</b>	Department of State
<b>DP</b>	<b>displaced person.</b> An individual temporarily uprooted from his or her home.
<b>DR</b>	disaster response

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<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of the Congo
<b>DRM</b>	Disaster Response and Mitigation Division
<b>DSM</b>	dry skim milk
<b>DTP</b>	diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis
<b>DWM</b>	dry whole milk
<b>EAC</b>	<b>Emergency Action Committee.</b> Organization established at a post for the purpose of directing and coordinating the post's response to emergency situations.
<b>EC</b>	European Community
<b>ECA</b>	East and Central Africa
<b>ECHO</b>	European Community Humanitarian Office
<b>EDRC</b>	Emergency Disaster Response Coordinator
<b>EMCA</b>	Europe, Middle East, and Central Asia
<b>EPI</b>	Expanded Program for Immunization
<b>epicenter</b>	Point on the Earth's surface directly above the point of origin (focus or hypocenter) of an earthquake.
<b>ETA</b>	estimated time of arrival
<b>ETD</b>	estimated time of departure
<b>ETE</b>	estimated time en route
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EXECSEC</b>	Executive Secretary

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<b>FAA</b>	Foreign Assistance Act of 1961
<b>FAO</b>	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FEMA</b>	United States Federal Emergency Management Agency
<b>FEWSNET</b>	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
<b>FFP</b>	Food for Peace
<b>FM</b>	field manual
<b>FOG</b>	field operations guide
<b>food basket</b>	The particular selection of food commodities that is handled by the assistance operation and included in the rations distributed to the target beneficiaries.
<b>food pipeline</b>	The various location points (port of origin, ship on high seas, port of entry, distribution system) and the amount of food going to an affected population.
<b>FY</b>	<b>fiscal year.</b> October 1 to September 30 for the United States Government.
<b>GAM</b>	global acute malnutrition
<b>GMT</b>	Greenwich mean time
<b>GO_</b>	Three-letter abbreviation for Government of _____; for example, GOK (Government of Kenya) or GOJ (Government of Japan).
<b>GPS</b>	global positioning system
<b>GTA</b>	graphic training aid

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<b>GTZ</b>	German Technical Assistance Agency
<b>HA</b>	humanitarian assistance
<b>HDR</b>	humanitarian daily ration
<b>HF</b>	high frequency
<b>HIC</b>	Humanitarian Information Center
<b>HQ</b>	headquarters
<b>hurricane</b>	<i>See tropical cyclone.</i>
<b>IBRD</b>	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, often called the World Bank
<b>ICASS</b>	<b>International Cooperative Administrative Support Services.</b> Program through which the USG provides and shares the cost of common administrative support at posts overseas.
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>ICVA</b>	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
<b>IDA</b>	<b>International Development Association.</b> Part of the World Bank that provides interest-free loans and some grants for programs aimed at boosting economic growth and improving living conditions.
<b>IDP</b>	<b>internally displaced person.</b> A displaced person who is still within the borders of his or her country of origin.
<b>IFRC</b>	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
<b>IO</b>	international organization

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<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>JHOC</b>	Joint Humanitarian Operations Course
<b>JICA</b>	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
<b>JP</b>	joint publication
<b>JTF</b>	joint task force
<b>LAC</b>	Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>MAM</b>	moderate acute malnutrition
<b>MCH</b>	maternal and child health
<b>MDRO</b>	Mission Disaster Relief Officer
<b>MDRP</b>	Mission Disaster Relief Plan
<b>MIS</b>	Management Information Systems
<b>mitigation</b>	Activities undertaken in advance to limit the adverse impact of disasters.
<b>MOU</b>	memorandum of understanding
<b>MUAC</b>	<b>mid-upper arm circumference.</b> Measurement to determine nutritional status of children.
<b>NGO</b>	<b>nongovernmental organization.</b> Defined by USAID as any nonprofit or profit-making organization receiving or providing USAID-funded assistance. General usage of this term in the wider humanitarian community, however, is based on an informal definition that excludes profit-making organizations and is not limited to organizations associated with USAID. NGO tends to be synonymous with PVO.
<b>OAS</b>	Organization of American States



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<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>OFAC</b>	Office of Foreign Assets Control
<b>OFDA</b>	Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance
<b>OFDA/W</b>	Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance, headquarters in Washington, D.C.
<b>OLU</b>	Operations Liaison Unit
<b>OMA</b>	Office of Military Affairs
<b>OPLAN</b>	operations plan
<b>OPS</b>	Operations Division
<b>ORS</b>	oral rehydration salts
<b>ORT</b>	oral rehydration therapy
<b>OSD</b>	Office of the Secretary of Defense
<b>OSOCC</b>	Onsite Operations Coordination Center
<b>OTI</b>	USAID Office of Transition Initiatives
<b>PAHO</b>	Pan-American Health Organization
<b>PEM</b>	protein-energy malnutrition
<b>PMP</b>	prevention, mitigation, and preparedness
<b>Post</b>	United States Embassy, Consulate, or USAID Mission
<b>preparedness</b>	Activities undertaken in advance to ensure effective response to the impact of disasters.
<b>prevention</b>	Activities undertaken in advance to absolutely prevent the adverse impact of disasters.
<b>PRM</b>	Population, Refugees, and Migration
<b>PS</b>	Program Support

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<b>PSC</b>	Personal Services Contractor
<b>pulses</b>	beans, lentils, and peas
<b>PVO</b>	private voluntary organization; see also <i>NGO</i> .
<b>RA</b>	regional advisors
<b>RATS</b>	Response Alternatives for Technical Services
<b>RDAP</b>	Regional Disaster Assistance Program
<b>RefCoord</b>	Refugee Coordinator
<b>Reftel</b>	reference telegram
<b>refugee</b>	A person who is outside his or her country of origin who, because of a well-founded fear of persecution, is unable to return to that country or to prevail upon that country for protection.
<b>RMT</b>	response management team
<b>SAM</b>	severe acute malnutrition
<b>SATCOM</b>	satellite communications system
<b>SDCA</b>	Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency
<b>SDR</b>	Swiss Disaster Relief
<b>Septel</b>	separate telegram
<b>SFP</b>	Supplementary Feeding Program
<b>SIDA</b>	Swedish International Development Agency
<b>SITREP</b>	situation report
<b>SRT</b>	strategic resources team
<b>STI</b>	sexually transmitted infection
<b>SWAN</b>	Southern, West, and North Africa
<b>TA</b>	travel authorization

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<b>TAG</b>	technical assistance group
<b>TFC</b>	Therapeutic Feeding Center
<b>TFP</b>	Therapeutic Feeding Program
<b>tropical cyclone</b>	An intense tropical weather system of strong thunderstorms with a well-defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds of 119 km/hr or higher. The term hurricane is used for Northern Hemisphere tropical cyclones east of the International Date Line to the Greenwich Meridian. The term typhoon is used for Pacific tropical cyclones north of the Equator and west of the International Date Line.
<b>tropical storm</b>	An organized system of strong thunderstorms with a defined surface circulation and wind speeds between 64 and 118 km/hr.
<b>tsunami</b>	A system of sea waves that propagate outward from the source region, formed as a result of a large-scale disturbance over a short period of time. The disturbance can be submarine volcanic eruptions, displacement of submarine sediments, coastal landslides, meteor impact, or earthquakes.
<b>typhoon</b>	See <i>tropical cyclone</i> .
<b>UAC</b>	unaccompanied children
<b>UHF</b>	ultra high frequency
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCHR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNDAC</b>	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program

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<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNJLC</b>	United Nations Joint Logistics Center
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>USAJFKSWCS</b>	United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School
<b>USAR</b>	urban search and rescue
<b>USD</b>	United States dollars
<b>USDA</b>	United States Department of Agriculture
<b>USG</b>	United States Government
<b>USGS</b>	United States Geological Survey
<b>USPHS</b>	United States Public Health Service
<b>USUN</b>	United States Mission to the United Nations
<b>VHF</b>	very high frequency
<b>WASH</b>	water, sanitation, and hygiene
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Program
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WSB</b>	wheat-soya blend
<b>Z-Score</b>	Standard deviation above or below the mean.







