BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)

China – Earthquake

Fact Sheet #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 May 13, 2008

BACKGROUND AND KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- On May 12, a magnitude 7.9 earthquake struck Wenchuan County in China's southwest Sichuan Province, killing an estimated 15,350 people, injuring more than 26,000 others, and leaving thousands buried under collapsed buildings, according to Sichuan provincial government officials.
- Blocked roadways, severed communications, landslides, and inclement weather continue to prevent full access to the most affected areas, thereby hampering relief operations. The humanitarian community expects the number of confirmed deaths to increase significantly once rescue teams access the most affected areas near the epicenter and begin to rescue people buried under fallen buildings.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE		SOURCE
Total Dead (Estimated)	15,350	GOC[1] – May 13, 2008
Total Injured (Estimated)	26,000	GOC – May 13, 2008

FY 2008 HUMANITARIAN FUNDING PROVIDED TO DATE IN RESPONSE TO EARTHQUAKE

USAID/OFDA Assistance to China.....$500,000

CURRENT SITUATION

- Storms, inaccessible highways, and severed communications prevented immediate access to the mountainous earthquake-affected region immediately following the quake. On May 13, the GOC deployed rescue teams and army troops to Wenchuan County. The GOC plans to send a total of 50,000 army troops to the most affected areas to facilitate recovery efforts and relief operations. According to media reports, approximately 1,300 medics and troops have arrived so far, as vehicular access remains impossible.
- The number of casualties in areas closest to the epicenter remains uncertain given the lack of access to the area. According to the GOC, nearly 18,700 people are buried under fallen buildings in Mianyang city in Wenchuan County and approximately 7,400 others are confirmed dead. In Beichuan County, 31 miles from the epicenter, the earthquake killed up to 7,000 people, injured as many as 10,000 others, and damaged 80 percent of buildings. In the provincial capital Chengdu, Sichuan government authorities report more than 950 deaths. In Dujiangyan city, an estimated 900 students remain buried under a collapsed school. Neighboring areas were also affected, with significant casualties in Gansu and Shaanxi provinces, according to the U.S. Embassy in Beijing.
- An IFRC assessment team has been on the ground since the morning of May 13, and Chinese Red Cross volunteers began assisting relief efforts immediately following the earthquake. In addition, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) remains on standby to assist the GOC after issuing an U.N. Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team alert.

Emergency Relief Supplies

- As aftershocks continued through May 13, residents of affected areas who were unable or unwilling to return to damaged and hazardous homes set up tent cities. As a result of the displacement, emergency humanitarian needs include temporary shelter materials, blankets, and water. In addition, affected populations require emergency medical assistance and food.

USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

- On May 13, U.S. Ambassador Clark T. Randt, Jr., declared a disaster due to the impact of the earthquake on surrounding populations. In response to the humanitarian needs of affected populations, USAID/OFDA is providing $500,000 through the U.S. Embassy in Beijing to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) for the procurement and distribution of emergency relief supplies. USAID/OFDA continues to monitor the situation closely and is prepared to provide additional assistance as necessary.

[1] Government of China (GOC)

USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO CHINA FOR EARTHQUAKE

Implementing Partner	***Activity***	***Location***	***Amount***
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE[1]			
IFRC	Emergency Relief Supplies	Affected Areas	$500,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			**$500,000**
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO CHINA IN FY 2008			**$500,000**

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. Information on organizations responding to the humanitarian situation in China may be available at www.reliefweb.int.
- 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, warehouse space, etc); 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: www.cidi.org or (703) 276-1914
    - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int