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Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
Policy for Humanitarian Action

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A woman carries a basket through a field in Bangladesh. Photo Courtesy of Jennifer Hardy/ Catholic Relief Services

Introduction

This Policy for Humanitarian Action outlines the context in which USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) operates, the fundamental principles and core values which underpin OFDA’s humanitarian activities, and the approach OFDA takes to address the critical humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable disaster-affected populations around the world.

The policy derives from OFDA’s mandate, which encompasses the fundamental aims of humanitarian action—saving lives, alleviating human suffering, and mitigating the economic and social impact of disasters. It recognizes the links between independent humanitarian action and broader aid policies. In the context of this policy, humanitarian action includes protection and disaster assistance, disaster risk reduction, and efforts to build resilience. As part of the U.S. Government (USG), OFDA works to advance U.S. national interests, recognizing that needs-based humanitarian assistance is an important U.S. interest in its own right. OFDA’s authority and mandate flow from the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, in which the U.S. Congress confirmed that “prompt assistance to alleviate human suffering caused by natural and manmade disasters is an important expression of the humanitarian concern and tradition of the people of the United States.” This policy outlines how OFDA’s core values and strategic goals shape its work around the world.



Background

Each year, over 300 million people are affected by natural disasters and man-made crises around the world. In recent years, the scope and intensity of disasters has increased, challenging the capacity of the international community, local governments, and civil society to meet humanitarian needs. Global climate change, the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters, rapid urbanization, and intractable conflicts pose difficult challenges for humanitarian actors. Populations are on the move: by the close of 2014, 59.5 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced, the highest figure in 70 years¹.

The erosion of humanitarian access further compounds these challenges. Humanitarian action is rarely considered sacrosanct, and humanitarian workers are increasingly being targeted by both state and non-state actors, dramatically increasing the risks involved in the delivery of high-quality assistance in progressively more challenging and complex environments.

¹ Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Global Trends, Forced Displacement in 2014. UNHCR breaks this total down into 38.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs); 19.5 million refugees; and 1.8 million asylum seekers. Within the federal government, OFDA has responsibility for assistance to IDPs globally.

The humanitarian landscape is also increasingly complex, and at times, crowded. Poorly coordinated responses can waste precious resources and imperil lives. Reforms in the international humanitarian architecture, initiated in 2005, have helped bring much-needed improvement. However, recent large-scale emergencies, including the Haiti earthquake and Pakistan floods in 2010, the ongoing Syria crisis, and the Ebola crisis in West Africa, have all demonstrated the need for significant further improvement and reform. In addition, new humanitarian actors continue to emerge, offering fresh challenges and opportunities for collaboration.

The U.S. is committed to working with partners throughout the world to address these challenges. OFDA is dedicated to being a global leader in providing needs-based humanitarian assistance. This commitment stems from a humanitarian tradition deeply rooted within American history and culture and is embodied in OFDA's mandate.

OFDA was created in 1964 in response to a lack of coordination in USG humanitarian assistance provided to the survivors of a major earthquake in Skopje, a city in the former Yugoslavia. What initially began as a small coordination office housed at USAID has evolved into a team of hundreds of humanitarian and disaster response professionals based in Washington, D.C., and in field locations throughout the world. OFDA, which remains an office within USAID, serves as the lead federal coordinator for international disaster response and is charged with coordinating USG international humanitarian response activities and developing knowledge, best practices, and lessons learned to continuously improve these efforts. OFDA's legal authority flows from Section 491 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, which authorizes OFDA to provide assistance for natural and human-caused disasters.

There are multiple agencies and offices within the USG that provide different aspects of humanitarian assistance. In pursuit of its mandate, OFDA leads the USG in responding to disasters overseas by coordinating efforts, partnering with a range of humanitarian actors, providing rapid and flexible funding, deploying personnel to assess vulnerability and evolving situations on-the-ground, providing technical guidance, coordinating within the international humanitarian architecture, and making strategic programming and response recommendations. OFDA has strong programming, operational, and logistical capacities, a robust field presence, advisors in key coordination hubs globally, and a vast network of partners.

This Policy for Humanitarian Actions details OFDA's humanitarian commitment, core values, strategic humanitarian drivers, and overall policy goals.

Humanitarian Commitment and Values

OFDA upholds five core values. These values are inspired by overarching and fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, and operational independence. These humanitarian principles and the core values outlined below underpin all of OFDA's work—both in designing and delivering humanitarian programming and in conducting all professional duties, in the field and at headquarters.

Core Value 1 - Needs-Based Assistance

OFDA is first and foremost focused on people who have been affected by disasters. The Foreign Assistance Act directed the President to “ensure that the assistance provided by the United States shall, to the greatest extent possible, reach those most in need.” As a direct result of this legislative requirement, OFDA strives to provide assistance on the basis of need. OFDA will ensure that people who are more vulnerable to disasters due to age, gender, disability, or other factors can equally benefit from assistance provided to the community.

Core Value 2 - Commitment to People Affected by Disasters

OFDA believes that people affected by a disaster should be at the center of the response and, as such, should be actively involved from start to finish. Recognizing that communities and governments are often best placed to respond to disasters, OFDA seeks whenever possible to build upon country capacities at all levels to prepare for and respond to emergencies. Assistance can have adverse side effects on those affected by disaster



Women clean the scrubs of health care workers responding to the Ebola virus disease outbreak in Liberia. Photo Courtesy of Morgana Wingard/USAID

or conflict, but OFDA seeks to mitigate any adverse effects by working closely with partners to consult with impacted populations. International humanitarian assistance strives to be principled and “do no harm” since assistance may provide one side in a conflict an advantage over another, make a community or a portion of the community a target for attack, or create further conflict within a community. OFDA’s policies, approaches, and programming will always seek to mitigate these risks.

Core Value 3 - Transparency and Accountability

OFDA seeks to be transparent and accountable to the American people who fund its work, to the affected populations we serve, and to the partners we work with on a daily basis. OFDA is committed to transparent and open decision-making within the bounds of USG regulation and policy. As a learning organization, OFDA constantly seeks to improve programming to the benefit of those in need. OFDA strives to apply industry best practices in monitoring, evaluation, and reporting to ensure that it meets its accountability and learning responsibilities.

Core Value 4 - Professionalism and Integrity

OFDA strives to conduct itself in a professional manner, making decisions based on technical knowledge and in support of program quality and continued innovation. OFDA draws on the experience of professional humanitarians and technical specialists, often from the very communities which are experiencing disasters. OFDA also seeks to conduct itself with integrity in its interactions with all parts of the humanitarian community.

Core Value 5 - Adaptability and Flexibility

The needs of the community and the resources available to respond can change very quickly after a disaster or during a conflict. OFDA prides itself on being an office of open-minded problem solvers who can adapt to a myriad of complex situations, contexts, organizations, and cultures. As a part of its commitment to placing the needs of those affected first, OFDA places a high value on remaining flexible and adaptable to the changing situation during a response. OFDA works with the broader humanitarian community to respond to changing needs as quickly as it can.

Excellence in International Humanitarian Response

OFDA's overarching goal is to excel in international humanitarian response. OFDA focuses on excelling on three levels—OFDA's own operations and programs, broad USG coordination as lead federal coordinator, and leadership within the international system. To this end, OFDA has adopted the three Strategic Goals below to guide its work.

Strategic Goal 1 - Excel in Provision of Assistance

OFDA has strengthened its systems and capabilities for disaster response over the past several decades, which has enabled it to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance through quality operations, programming, and partnerships. OFDA will build on this tradition by: (1) strengthening operational response capacity; (2) maintaining a robust field presence; and (3) providing rapid and flexible funding to a diverse range of partners from across the humanitarian landscape.

With respect to operational response capacity, OFDA continually monitors emerging disasters, prepositions relief supplies, and sometimes pre-deploys response teams to help at-risk countries prepare even before a calamity hits. As soon as disaster strikes, OFDA utilizes its professional cadre of humanitarian experts, its standby partnerships with a range of disaster response professionals (such as urban search-and-rescue teams), and its logistical expertise to rapidly move life-saving assistance to the scene of a disaster. In large-scale crises, OFDA will deploy a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), supported by a Response Management Team (RMT) in Washington, D.C., to manage the USG disaster response. OFDA also works closely with host country capacity to support existing response structures. OFDA will continue to prioritize its investments in building its operational response capacities and strengthening its programmatic approaches.

OFDA maintains a robust field presence through a network of regional and country-based advisors with deep expertise in the humanitarian field and long-standing knowledge of the local and regional contexts. These advisors and their teams are strategically located at key humanitarian hubs around the world. OFDA will continue to invest human resources in building this field presence, as this presence allows OFDA to rapidly assess unfolding situations and make principled, needs-based decisions.

OFDA is one of the humanitarian system's largest financial donors, relying on its International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account as its primary source of rapid and flexible funding. OFDA works closely with programmatic partners to identify appropriate and effective programmatic responses to disasters and emergencies, and then provides funding to support these programs. OFDA does this through a standard business process, which is comprised of thorough technical and financial reviews, and complies with USG procurement policies and regulations. As an emergency response office, OFDA has a number of authorities which enable it to provide funding in a rapid and flexible manner, while still remaining accountable to the American public.

Strategic Goal 2 - Coordinate Broad USG Engagement

As set forth in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, needs-based humanitarian assistance is strongly in the U.S. national interest. Because of this legislative mandate, a number of USG federal agencies and offices are active and involved whenever a disaster strikes. As the lead federal coordinator for USG international disaster responses, OFDA is tasked with ensuring that USG assistance is well-coordinated. To do this, OFDA maintains strong relationships with federal partners, both during steady-state periods and during times of crisis. These include long-standing relationships with other USAID offices and bureaus. The USAID Office of Food for Peace, OFDA's sister office within the DCHA Bureau, is a particularly vital partner, often deploying staff on DARTs and participating on RMTs; conducting joint needs analysis; and implementing joint programming, when appropriate. OFDA maintains partnerships with a range of other departments and agencies, such as the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. As catastrophic disasters are on the rise, OFDA recognizes that interagency coordination must be further strengthened and



OFDA staff load emergency relief commodities for transport to populations affected by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. Photo Courtesy of Mark Ralston/AFP.

continues to improve capacity across the broader interagency, promoting greater information sharing, expanding interagency agreements to “pull in” additional technical expertise, and fostering better management.

OFDA’s engagement with federal partners is guided by the principles and values espoused by the humanitarian community, most notably that of needs-based assistance. In addition, OFDA takes into consideration a number of criteria when partnering with another federal department or agency. These include:

- Demands of the response (the “pull” requirement from the field);
- The need for a unique capability that resides within the federal partner;
- Assessment of in-country policy and security dynamics;
- Operational requirements of deploying the partner overseas.

With respect to civil-military affairs, under the framework of principled humanitarian action, OFDA requests support from DOD when unique military resources are required to meet identified and validated humanitarian needs. When DOD assets are used in support of humanitarian response, OFDA maintains its leadership role in humanitarian assistance within the USG. OFDA strengthens relationships with its military counterparts, most notably through its placement of Humanitarian Assistance Advisors at U.S. combatant commands. OFDA also provides international humanitarian training for the military and the broader USG interagency around the world.

Increasingly, OFDA is focusing on strengthening its partnerships with parts of the USG involved in health emergencies and pandemics, including both the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Public Health Service within HHS.

Strategic Goal 3 - Ensure the Effectiveness of the International Humanitarian System

Throughout its history, OFDA has played a global leadership role in shaping and encouraging policies to improve humanitarian action. In large measure, these policies address the structure and performance of the international

humanitarian architecture and the broader humanitarian community. Investing in the architecture is critical, as USG humanitarian response can only be effective in the context of a well-functioning international system. OFDA facilitates frank and thoughtful dialogue among humanitarian actors, aiming to find the most effective solutions to problems and to facilitate their translation into action. OFDA engages other donors, multilateral institutions, regional entities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in global fora and bilaterally, aiming to harmonize and optimize approaches to humanitarian assistance.

As the international community continues to refine the humanitarian architecture, OFDA will continue to provide policy leadership, funding, and technical input, with a focus on efforts to strengthen humanitarian leadership, improve coordination and accountability, and strengthen needs assessments and strategic planning for responses. OFDA supports the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for a wide array of initiatives, primarily focused on strengthening the humanitarian coordination leadership function, including through the expansion of the deployment pool to include high-caliber candidates from across the humanitarian sector; through the reform of the humanitarian coordinator selection and training process; and through similar reforms for the resident coordinator position working in close partnership with other USG agencies.

OFDA invests in building the technical and programmatic capacity of the international system. OFDA technical advisors serve on a range of multi-stakeholder groups, focused on identifying best practices and lessons learned, and developing technical standards and new methodologies for the humanitarian field. This includes deliberate efforts to fund innovative new programs. Furthermore, by funding a diverse set of humanitarian partners, OFDA seeks to build depth and capacity in the architecture to respond to an increasingly varied set of humanitarian challenges.

OFDA works in concert with other donors to influence the configuration and direction of the humanitarian system. OFDA partners closely with other donor governments in Washington, D.C., with donor capitals, and in field locations throughout the world. OFDA maintains strong relationships in policy fora and with other donors globally, primarily through the presence of our Humanitarian Advisors located at key U.S. Missions to the UN in New York, Geneva, and Rome.

OFDA shares information to ensure coordinated responses, engages in joint policy dialogue and planning, and may jointly fund programs. OFDA is a leader and active participant in the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative, with its 23 principles and best practices, and remains committed to reaching out to donors outside the GHD in order to ensure that all donors are striving to meet the same goals. The USG, through OFDA, currently co-chairs GHD (2014–2016).

OFDA recognizes the need to expand its donor coordination efforts to leverage unique comparative advantages and is focusing on building partnerships with new and emerging donors, as well as other rising global actors. OFDA also believes that the private sector and corporate foundations are key donor partners and sources of funding for humanitarian efforts. In partnership with the broader agency, OFDA plans to solidify its strategy for engaging with the private sector and with foundations. Finally, OFDA, through its partnership with the USAID Center for International Disaster Information, engages with the American public and with diaspora-led organizations, providing guidance on donations and disseminating best practices.

Cross-Cutting Themes

As part of its efforts to accomplish the core Strategic Goals detailed above, OFDA focuses on a set of cross-cutting themes and actions. These are highlighted below.

Theme 1 - Strengthening Partnerships

U.S. humanitarian assistance sits within a larger ecosystem. To excel in international response, OFDA must partner with and support a vast network of front-line humanitarian agencies that implement programs on the ground. Increasing demands on the humanitarian community necessitates a collaborative approach that leverages



OFDA-supported teams work on housing repairs following the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti.
Photo Courtesy of Kendra Helmer/USAID

the comparative advantage of all actors. Burden-sharing in meeting the needs of affected people and saving lives is critical. OFDA therefore places primary importance on strong partnerships throughout the humanitarian system.

The primary responsibility for providing humanitarian assistance lies with the affected state. OFDA typically provides assistance only after the government of the affected state requests assistance. Thus, OFDA strives to implement its programs in partnership with national- and local-level governments. OFDA increasingly seeks to build the capacity of national and local governments to manage disasters and crises in their own countries.

NGOs are key humanitarian actors, with specialized expertise in delivering assistance to vulnerable groups. As a group, NGOs have historically received the majority of OFDA funds. OFDA will continue to prioritize funding for both international and national NGOs. OFDA also works closely on policy coordination with NGO coalitions, such as InterAction and the International Council on Voluntary Agencies.

During the past few decades, OFDA has built strong relationships with public international organizations working in the humanitarian arena. OFDA is the USG's institutional lead with OCHA, which holds the central role in coordinating the international humanitarian architecture. This partnership manifests in shared programmatic objectives, sustained policy dialogue, and close coordination. In addition, OFDA provides strong financial support to the major UN agencies engaged in providing humanitarian assistance. OFDA is committed to these partnerships that sustain critical humanitarian support in key sectors, including food security, agriculture and livelihoods, health and nutrition, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).

Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have a unique role to play as auxiliaries of national governments. Increasingly, national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have also played a strong role on the international stage. OFDA has a strong relationship with the International Federation for the Red Cross (IFRC), and also works with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), for which the Department of State's Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration holds the institutional lead. Furthermore, OFDA is increasingly establishing direct partnerships with national societies in order to ensure that its funds and programs have a strong impact at the local level.

Theme 2 - Protecting Vulnerable Populations

Effective humanitarian response must prioritize certain extremely vulnerable groups within disaster-affected communities. Disaster-affected populations are not homogeneous: some groups are more affected, less able to access assistance, and more vulnerable to risks for harm, exploitation, and abuse. OFDA seeks to analyze the diverse needs, vulnerabilities, and assets within disaster-affected populations and tailor humanitarian assistance accordingly by paying attention to:

GENDER

OFDA's humanitarian programming includes gender analysis of how women, men, girls, and boys are affected differently by disasters and the unique needs of each of these groups. Drawing from this analysis, OFDA works with its partners to involve each gender group in assistance planning and delivery, ensuring that all groups are able to access assistance equitably, and that unique needs are met.

OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

In addition to gender differences, other factors affect the vulnerability of parts of an affected population. OFDA seeks to identify the unique challenges facing these groups, such as children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, LGBT individuals, and IDPs, and deliver humanitarian assistance that is accessible and appropriate for these groups.

PROTECTION

Disaster-affected populations face risks for harm, exploitation, and abuse, in addition to their material needs. In order to minimize risks and address effects of harm, exploitation, and abuse in disaster settings, OFDA prioritizes protection as a vital component of humanitarian assistance efforts. OFDA's approach to protection includes an analysis of protection risks, which result from the combination of threats such as armed conflict, absence of public order, gender-based violence, and displacement and vulnerabilities, such as those described above. OFDA's protection efforts focus on risks that are created or exacerbated as the result of a disaster. OFDA both mainstreams protection within all humanitarian assistance programs and supports targeted protection interventions.

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE


Recognizing a risk of exploitation and abuse by aid workers themselves, OFDA requires all recipients of funding to adopt a code of conduct that is consistent with the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises.

Theme 3 - Investing in Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience

Part of excelling in international response is recognizing the need to incorporate disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience efforts into response programs. As part of its mandate, OFDA's role in DRR is to analyze the potential for and likelihood of shocks, take actions to mitigate specific hazards, and incorporate DRR into response, early recovery, and transition. DRR programs, which help communities prepare for, mitigate, and prevent the worst impacts of a major shock, can help contribute to building the resilience of populations that are particularly vulnerable to disasters. OFDA's DRR programs focus on three core areas: prioritizing and strengthening early warning, preparedness, mitigation and prevention; integrating preparedness and mitigation with disaster response, early recovery, and transition to foster resilience; and supporting diversified, resilient livelihood strategies.

OFDA's Conceptual Framework for DRR outlines how DRR activities relate to and support broader humanitarian and development goals. OFDA's Global DRR Strategy, closely linked to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030), helps staff and partners think critically about the context, criteria, and options for DRR programming in any given region based on OFDA's core strengths.

Since DRR programs are part of the larger effort to build resilience, DRR programs should be squarely situated within the context of USAID's long-term development programs. Experience has shown that

A photograph showing a woman in an orange shirt holding a young child in an orange shirt, looking out a window. The view outside the window shows a town in ruins, with debris and damaged buildings. The sky is overcast. The window frame is white and has some orange tape on it. The background wall is green.

Survivors of Typhoon Haiyan overlook the storm damage in the Philippines. Photo Courtesy of Odd Andersen/AFP

effectively building capacity at national and local levels to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters requires a sustained, comprehensive approach in both development and humanitarian programs.

Theme 4 - Providing Technical Leadership and Innovation

SECTORAL EXPERTISE, LEADERSHIP, AND BEST PRACTICES

OFDA's technical expertise is one of its greatest strengths. OFDA supports and liaises closely with standard-setting bodies; thoroughly vets all projects it supports; supports the development and promotion of evidence-based assessment methods; and provides training and capacity building internally and to partners. By doing so, OFDA ensures both the quality of the projects it supports and the improvement and growth of the entire humanitarian community in developing and following best practices. OFDA also provides technical advice to the response and recovery efforts of other organizations, including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's clusters, international and local NGOs, other USAID offices and USG agencies, host country governments, and U.S.-based and foreign universities.

OFDA is a major supporter of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), a consortium of more than 90 countries (donor as well as recipient nations), and serves as the political and operational focal point for INSARAG within the USG. INSARAG continues to improve urban search-and-rescue (USAR) delivery mechanisms including the development of INSARAG Guidelines that define the international USAR response methodology and an international USAR Team Classification System. OFDA continues to lead in international USAR capacity development, both for existing teams and those just starting out.

OFDA retains a multi-disciplinary team of experts that provide guidance on planning, policy, and programming issues covering four core areas of expertise: livelihoods and food security (including agriculture, livestock, and markets); natural hazards (including shelter and settlements, mitigation of weather- and climate-related disasters, and geological hazards); public health (including WASH, nutrition, pharmaceuticals, and emergency health); and vulnerable populations (including gender, displaced populations, cultural issues, and humanitarian protection). Each area of sector expertise is set out in more detail below:

LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY: OFDA's technical expertise covers a wide range of topics, including agricultural production and productivity; mitigation of agricultural hazards; irrigation; livestock; fisheries; emergency trans-boundary outbreak pest monitoring; pesticide safety; environmental concerns and natural resource management; market systems support; post-disaster livelihoods restoration; alternative livelihoods development; microfinance; and infrastructure rehabilitation. OFDA works very closely with USAID's Office of Food for Peace in all of its food security efforts.

NATURAL HAZARDS: OFDA covers all aspects of settlements and shelter policy, planning, and programming, including DRR activities in rural areas and, increasingly, in urban areas. OFDA also monitors and provides advice on mitigating and preparing for weather/climate and water-related disasters, including floods, droughts, cyclones, extreme temperatures, tsunamis, and climatic variability. OFDA provides support to geological hazard-related projects, including the Volcano Disaster Assistance Program, the Earthquake Disaster Assistance Team, and training programs to reduce the impact of geologic hazards.

PUBLIC HEALTH: OFDA's sectoral specialists cover all aspects of WASH, including clean water supply, appropriate environmental and personal sanitation, and personal hygiene promotion, as well as emergency health services, medical and public health concerns, and emergency nutrition treatment and prevention. OFDA also retains pharmacists to handle a wide range of human and animal pharmaceutical issues.

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS: OFDA's team of social scientists, gender experts, and protection specialists provide assistance across all humanitarian sectors. In so doing, they ensure that the particular needs of women, men, boys, and girls are considered; that IDPs receive appropriate assistance; that cultural and ethnic issues are taken into account; and that humanitarian protection is mainstreamed throughout all interventions.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The goal of OFDA's monitoring and evaluation work is to improve program learning and to increase accountability across OFDA's worldwide portfolio so that its programming is more effective and achieves greater impact. Through systematic monitoring, OFDA and its partners aim to increase understanding of the outputs, outcomes, and lessons learned from OFDA activities worldwide. OFDA uses performance and impact evaluations to increase understanding of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of OFDA actions. OFDA expects its partners to incorporate monitoring and evaluation into programs implemented with OFDA funding. Partner monitoring can be augmented by OFDA staff monitoring visits. In addition, OFDA works to build partner capacity in monitoring and evaluation by providing technical support and collaborating to ensure that monitoring and evaluation best practices are incorporated into partner programming and learning.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

OFDA views operational security as vital to humanitarian programming, and has developed an engagement strategy to build this capacity in its partners and the wider humanitarian community. This includes practical research and capacity development, as well as engagement with the wider community to effect systemic change. OFDA believes that adherence to humanitarian principles protects aid workers, and we remain cognizant that our assistance is informed by the specific needs of our beneficiaries and the operational requirements of our partners. OFDA is aware that its actions and statements can have significant impacts on its partners' ability to operate safely. For this reason, OFDA is sensitive to the security impacts of policy positions and program decisions, and strives to communicate this to the wider USG.

Conclusion

This Policy for Humanitarian Action is an expression of OFDA's enduring commitment to humanitarian principles and action and sets forth the core values and commitments which guide OFDA's work. While the global context and the humanitarian landscape will continually evolve, OFDA will remain dedicated to these core values and commitments.

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