

# HURRICANE RECONSTRUCTION AND PREPAREDNESS

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## HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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## HURRICANE RECONSTRUCTION AND PREPAREDNESS

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2006

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE,  
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:13 p.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Dan Burton (Chairman of the Subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. BURTON. Good afternoon. A quorum being present, the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere will come to order.

I ask unanimous consent that all Members' and witnesses' written and opening statements be included in the record. Without objection, so ordered. I ask unanimous consent that all articles, exhibits, and extraneous or tabular material referred to by witnesses be included in the record. Without objection, so ordered.

And I ask unanimous consent that any Members who may attend today's hearing be a Member of the Subcommittee for purposes of receiving testimony and questioning witnesses after Subcommittee Members have been given the opportunity to do so. Without objection, so ordered.

We are less than 1 month into the storm season and many people throughout our hemisphere are watching weather reports, forecasts and storm system tracking models to prepare for the inevitable. Destructive winds, torrential downpours, devastating floods, major disruptions of essential services, mudslides and loss of life, are all possible and everybody is aware of that.

The images from Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Stan, Dennis Wilma and Ivan and other major storms are seared into our memory. No sooner have we begun to recover from the havoc brought by these storms do we find ourselves facing another round of serious weather. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts 13 to 16 named storms this year, and 4 to 6 hurricanes that could reach Category 3 strength or higher with winds in excess of 110 miles an hour, and we certainly do not need that after what we have seen in the southern part of this country last year.

This oversight hearing will look at the lessons learned from recent storm seasons, the delivery of emergency assistance, the reconstruction of critical infrastructure and community impacts and the level of preparedness that we have to plan and coordinate to mitigate these problems.

Tropical storms and hurricanes caused major problems in 2004 and 2005. There were 28 named storms and 15 hurricanes last

year, claiming thousands of lives and causing massive problems in the Gulf States, Central America and in a number of Caribbean nations. Heavily dependent on tourism, many Caribbean nations were hurt by the aftermath of the September 11th terrorism attacks in the United States and the subsequent U.S. economic recession and sluggish recovery. Haiti, Grenada, Jamaica and the Bahamas were hard hit by devastating hurricanes in 2004. In 2005 Hurricane Dennis heavily damaged Cuba and Grenada, which were still picking up the pieces from Hurricane Ivan in September 2004.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 9 of the 11 hurricane seasons since 1995 have been above normal.

Do we have a display of that? Let us have a slide. I would like to put that up there so everybody can see. These slides show a forecast for above normal temperatures throughout Latin American and the Caribbean and the high probability forecasts for precipitation.

This confluence of conditions in the ocean and the atmosphere warrant our attention and preparation for serious weather events.

Not too happy a picture, is it?

Intense storm systems can wipe out crops, cause shortages of food, supplies, poison water supplies, cripple power grids, disrupt energy supplies and distribution networks and cause fuel shortages. Hurricane Rita knocked out 28 percent of United States refining capacity due to forced evacuations of nearly 600 oil and gas production platforms in the Gulf of Mexico. This is a subject we have been focusing on for many months with high oil and gas prices costing consumers more now than ever before. Hurricane Katrina focused our attention to the very real threat of disruptions in our domestic energy supply. Other congressional Committees with jurisdiction have conducted oversight hearings into the Federal response to hurricanes and lessons learned.

Under the jurisdiction of this Subcommittee dealing with oversight of foreign assistance activity to the Latin American-Caribbean region, we want to know whether the energy assistance we provided has helped to rehabilitate critical transportation infrastructure. Do we have the capacity to better monitor and provide advance warning to vulnerable populations that stand in the path of approaching storms? Can we provide strong storm teams to multiple locations? Are we prepositioning humanitarian supplies and emergency response equipment?

Last fall the House passed H.Con.Res. 280, a resolution that I sponsored, to urge expedited humanitarian relief as well as stronger efforts to provide technical assistance to Central American governments in order to strengthen to capacity of first responders and governmental institutions at the national, provincial and local levels. The legislation urges assistance which targets immediate and long-term infrastructure needs with a special emphasis on improvements that aim to increase emergency preparedness and withstand future natural disasters.

Before I conclude my opening statement today I want to emphasize the importance of drawing lessons from the past emergency response and recovery operations. This Subcommittee has convened many oversight hearings about illicit trafficking, transnational

crime and other threats to security in our hemisphere. When we turn to questions and answers after our first panel, I plan to go into detail of some of these findings in a GAO report released last week on Caribbean disaster recovery activities.

The GAO report uncovered numerous problems and failure to follow best practices anchored in lessons learned from past operations leading to a pattern of hampered recovery efforts in Haiti, Grenada, Jamaica and several other Caribbean nations.

The Caribbean region, our third border, poses many challenges for U.S. policies in areas this Subcommittee has addressed, in law enforcement, counterterrorism and counternarcotics. In the context of our hearing today clearly there are added budgetary pressures associated with humanitarian responses and in the reconstruction process. Federal agencies must be drawing lessons learned and instituting broader lessons to incorporate best practices in recovery and reconstruction programs. In the wake of a natural disaster, it is essential that we achieve effective cooperation with the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean to conduct assessments, deliver humanitarian and material assistance, coordinate technical assistance and logistical support.

I appreciate you gentlemen being here today. Let us have our ranking Democrat, Mr. Engel, who is very eloquent, to make his opening remarks.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Burton follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DAN BURTON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

We are less than one month into the storm season and many people throughout our Hemisphere are watching weather reports, forecasts and storm-system tracking models to prepare for the inevitable. Destructive winds, torrential downpours, devastating floods, major disruptions of essential services, mudslides, and loss of life.

The images from Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Stan, Dennis, Wilma and Ivan and other major storms are seared into our memory. No sooner have we begun to recover from the havoc wrought by these storms do we find ourselves facing another round of serious weather. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts 13 to 16 named storms this year and four to six hurricanes that could reach Category 3 strength or higher with winds in excess of 110 miles per hour.

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Tropical storms and hurricanes caused major problems in 2004 and 2005. There were 28 named storms and 15 Hurricanes last year, claiming thousands of lives and causing massive problems in the Gulf States, Central America and in a number of Caribbean nations. Heavily dependant on tourism, many Caribbean nations were hurt by the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States and the subsequent U.S. economic recession and sluggish recovery. Haiti, Grenada, Jamaica, and the Bahamas, were hard hit by devastating hurricanes in 2004. In 2005, Hurricane Dennis heavily damaged Cuba and Grenada, which were still picking up the pieces from Hurricane Ivan in September 2004.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, nine of the 11 hurricane seasons since 1995 have been above normal. Intense storm systems can wipeout crops, cause shortages of food supplies, poison water supplies, cripple power grids, disrupt energy supplies and distribution networks, and cause fuel shortages. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita knocked out 28 percent of U.S. refining capacity due to forced evacuations of nearly 600 oil and gas production platforms in the Gulf of Mexico. This is a subject we have been focusing on for many months, with high oil and gas prices costing consumers more than ever. Hurricane Katrina focused our attention to the very real threat of disruptions in our domestic energy

supply. Other Congressional Committees with jurisdiction have conducted oversight hearings into the Federal response to Katrina and lessons learned.

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Last fall the House passed H.Con.Res.280, a resolution that I sponsored to urge expedited humanitarian relief, as well as stronger efforts to provide technical assistance to Central American governments in order to strengthen the capacity of first responders and governmental institutions at the national, provincial, and local levels. The legislation urges assistance which targets immediate and long-term infrastructure needs, with a special emphasis on improvements that aim to increase emergency preparedness and withstand future natural disasters.

Before I conclude my opening statement today, I want to emphasize the importance of drawing lessons from past emergency response and recovery operations. This subcommittee has convened many oversight hearings about illicit trafficking, transnational crime, and other threats to security in our hemisphere. When we turn to Q&A after our first panel, I plan to go into detail some of the findings in a GAO report released last month on Caribbean Disaster Recovery Activities. The GAO Report uncovered numerous problems and a failure to follow best practices anchored in lessons-learned from past operations leading to a pattern of hampered recovery efforts in Haiti, Grenada, Jamaica and several other Caribbean nations.

The Caribbean region, our Third Border, poses many challenges for U.S. policy in areas this Subcommittee has addressed like law enforcement, counter-terrorism, and counter-narcotics. In the context of our hearing today, clearly there are added budgetary pressures associated with humanitarian responses and in the reconstruction process. Federal agencies must be drawing lessons learned and instituting broader efforts to incorporate best practices in recovery and reconstruction programs. In the wake of natural disasters it is essential that we achieve effective cooperation with the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean to conduct assessments, deliver humanitarian and material assistance, coordinate technical assistance and logistical support.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I want to start my eloquence by commending you for calling this timely hearing, which occurs during the beginning of what is predicted to be another active hurricane season.

While the devastating impact of hurricanes awakened Americans for generations to come about the destructive force of seasonal hurricanes on lives, livelihoods and communities, we must not forget that hurricanes are a regional phenomena. Let me add that the events in Washington the past several days with the rain have alerted everyone to the understanding that when it comes to weather none of us is immune regardless of where we are in the globe.

The 2005 Atlantic hurricane season produced an unprecedented 27 named storms, including 14 hurricanes. Five hurricanes, Dennis, Emily, Stan, Wilma and Beta, and Tropical Storm Gamma passed into the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, devastating parts of the Bahamas, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua. By November 2005 more than 800 people had lost their lives and a half million individuals had been displaced. The region sustained more than a billion dollars in damages, affecting homes, clinics and schools.

I just yesterday spoke with one of our colleagues, Congressman Taylor, who lives in Mississippi and was affected, and was telling me how he is still rebuilding and only two people in a square mile



area have been able to attempt to rebuild. It is just absolutely devastating.

Livelihoods were severely interrupted as the storms created major setbacks in agriculture and transportation systems, and predictions are that this hurricane cycle will be just as destructive.

Mr. Chairman and our witnesses, I firmly believe that we will witness far more weather-related calamities in the region. Global warming causes sea and atmosphere temperatures to rise, thereby fueling the intensity of storms. Unfortunately, the Administration has not dealt with the coming tragedy global warming is bringing. Efforts have been stifled, in my opinion, as Executive Branch experts say global warming is increasing but have not aggressively sought clean, alternative sources of energy.

Since one result of climate change is more intensive in these days of economic hardship, disaster response seems like one of the few growth industries. When discussing hurricane preparedness in the Caribbean and Central America, we must ask what United States measures USAID have taken in the past and what are the critical lessons that have been learned. Are we prepared for this year's hurricane season?

Are current United States assistance efforts for the Caribbean and Central America too small in light of the devastation caused by such storms as well as our need to strengthen and cement friendships with other countries in our hemisphere? How does the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance within USAID facilitate and coordinate U.S. Government emergency assistance overseas? What kinds of mitigation activities does the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance fund?

Given the Administration's abysmal response to the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina as well as charges of corruption, mismanagement in FEMA's construction efforts, it is only appropriate that we examine the record and capacity of the U.S. Agency for International Development to respond quickly and effectively to disasters in this Western Hemisphere.

So I greatly appreciate this hearing. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you, Mr. Engel.

Vice Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Weller.

Mr. WELLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome our two witnesses to our Subcommittee today, and I want to commend you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this timely hearing today as we enter yet another busy hurricane season for this year.

Hurricanes have thrown their tremendous might at home to the United States as well as to our neighbors to the south. Tens of thousands have lost their lives, been left needing care, homeless and needing long-term assistance. Especially devastating has been damage across Central America and across the Caribbean. Grenada, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Guatemala, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti have all experienced damage and death due to storms.

Mr. Chairman, I am particularly proud of how Americans have pitched in to help. The United States has responded generously with immediate humanitarian aid and assistance as well as long term recovery projects to help families and businesses get back on

their feet and build hope for the people of their native countries. Nearly \$1 billion were appropriated to send to Central America in 1999 in response to Hurricanes Mitch and Georges and hundreds of millions have been used in the last few years to help overdevastated Latin American and Caribbean countries and other disasters.

I am particularly anxious to hear the status of our response to recent events as well as what more we need to do and also what our friends and partners in the regions around the world have been doing to help in our own hemisphere. I am glad we are holding this hearing because it is important for us to review the lessons we have learned and the disaster response where we can respond efficiently and quickly to natural disasters with the general spirit that is uniquely American.

It is also important that we review the readiness steps taken by our friends in the neighboring countries in Latin America and the Caribbean so these governments are better equipped and able to prepare for disaster and respond to the incredible needs and their aftermath.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for conducting this hearing. I look forward to the testimony and questions with our witnesses.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you, Mr. Weller. Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I too would just like to echo what has already been said. This is a timely hearing. The seasons seem to be getting more and more severe. There is talk that perhaps global warming has something to do with it, but there are still denials that such a thing is occurring.

So I certainly look forward to the witnesses and once again commend you for calling this important hearing.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you, Mr. Payne.

Ms. Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. I would like to thank Chairman Burton for scheduling this timely hearing on hurricane reconstruction and preparedness in the Western Hemisphere. With the 2006 hurricane season already underway, many citizens here in our country as well as our neighbors in Central America and the Caribbean region are equally concerned about severe damages, personal tragedies that can unfold if we are not sufficiently prepared.

Only 1 week ago 12-foot high swells battered the Pacific coast of Central America destroying the homes of the many families in Guatemala. Thousands of other families across Central America still live in temporary shelters after last year's devastating hurricanes and as the governments are ill prepared to deal with the new surge of severe storms, torrential rainfalls and heavy flooding, the region is bracing for yet another tragedy, and this Committee has done important work in recognizing that successful recovery from natural disasters require a multi-level strategy. Such an approach includes U.S. disaster assistance to the region, cooperation with multilateral humanitarian organizations and the involvement of the national governments and all sectors of their societies in strengthening emergency preparedness and disaster mitigation techniques.

I am extremely pleased to see my dear friend Adolfo Franco, with whom I have worked on a number of issues, as well as Senior Re-

gional Advisor Callaghan and look forward to their testimony, given their combined expertise on economic and humanitarian assistance and on emergency responses in the region and worldwide.

And while no state is immune to flooding and heavy rains, the folks in my congressional district of south Florida are particularly exposed to the hurricanes and tropical storms that ravage through the Caribbean, Central America, and up to our southern shores.

Every year we witness firsthand the economic losses that hurricanes cause to the U.S. economy.

So the emerging democracies of the Western Hemisphere are particularly vulnerable to the impact of natural disasters. We need to promote economic growth, improve living standards and reduce poverty. Therefore, it is of great concern to me that we support the reconstruction of the countries devoid of infrastructures. If the people of Central America and the Caribbean see their homes rebuilt, the roads reconstructed and their schools and health facilities reopened, they will continue to fight for democracy and freedom in the region.

I welcome the insight of our witnesses on our multi-appropriation to help the countries in the Western Hemisphere deal with the disastrous effects of last year's unprecedented 13 hurricanes. The efforts of USAID's Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean and its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance have helped alleviate the suffering in the region with \$34 million in United States disaster relief efforts, and I would like the witnesses to elaborate on the progress we have made in rebuilding the affected countries' infrastructure. I would further ask Administrator Franco to comment on any linkage between providing U.S. disaster assistance and the promotion of the rule of law, human rights and democracies.

And I thank the Chairman for the time.

Mr. BURTON. We have Mr. Franco with us again. I think he has become almost a member of the Committee, or an adopted member of the Committee. He has served as Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean of the U.S. Agency for International Development since January 31st, 2002. He has testified before this Subcommittee numerous times. It is good to have you back again. Since you are a former staff member of this Committee you know the ropes better than 90 percent.

Mr. Callaghan is a Senior Regional Adviser and Coordinator for the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance and is based in San Jose, Costa Rica, which is not a bad duty. I was down there for the inauguration of Oscar Arias and it was a very nice time. I like Oscar Arias. I think he will do a good job.

And he serves as a regional help for development, deployment and coordination of emergency response activities. OFDA facilitates U.S. Government response activities in close coordination with USAID missions, U.S. Embassy's host governments and international and nongovernmental organizations. Tim's responsibilities include conducting initial assessments of damage in human needs and interventions after disasters occur in Latin America and the Caribbean.

And we welcome both of you. Will you please stand and be sworn?

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. BURTON. Okay. We will start with our good friend, Mr. Franco.

**TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE ADOLFO A. FRANCO, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. FRANCO. Thank you very much. I want to thank you very much for the warm welcome home to the International Relations Committee and appreciate the opportunity to testify before the Committee on our efforts at USAID to assist the Caribbean and Central America region on disaster mitigation.

As you noted, Mr. Chairman, and as noted by Vice Chairman Weller and Ranking Member Engel and Mr. Payne, over the past several years these regions have experienced a number of natural disasters, including hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes. And USAID, along with other government agencies, has played a role in providing humanitarian reconstruction and disaster prevention mitigation assistance throughout the region.

Today I greatly appreciate the opportunity to share with you our experiences with the assistance we provided on the hurricane-affected countries as well as the lessons we have learned which will better prepare us for this 2006 hurricane season.

Several devastating hurricanes have indeed struck the region over the past several years. In September and October 1998, Hurricanes Georges and Mitch successively battered the Caribbean and Central America region, leaving more than 19,000 people dead or missing, and displacing over 3 million people. In 2004, Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne struck through the Caribbean, causing loss of life and extensive damage particularly to the Islands you noted of Grenada, Jamaica and Haiti. Last year an unprecedented, as the Members know, 13 hurricanes successively battered the Caribbean basin, and five of these were particularly devastating to parts of Mexico, the Yucatan Peninsula area, Central America, and several Caribbean countries.

In response, the United States Government, through USAID, has provided recovery and reconstruction assistance. We have, with your assistance in appropriations provided \$587 million in Hurricane Mitch assistance, which included coordinating \$96 million with other United States Government agencies in Central America.

USAID also provided \$100 million in recovery and reconstruction assistance that you provided in supplemental appropriation to affected countries in the 2004 Caribbean hurricane cycle. USAID is providing an additional \$1 million currently in supplemental funding to assist the Guatemalan people in their recovery from Hurricane Stan.

USAID has incorporated the lessons learned from several previous hurricane assistance programs into our current hurricane recovery and reconstruction programs. USAID's Hurricane Mitch experience revealed the importance of having administrative, programmatic and financial mechanisms in place and on the ground that allow USAID to expeditiously design and initiate large-scale infrastructure and rehabilitation programs, while at the same time

providing the necessary emergency relief in the initial reconstruction assistance that is so critical.

Our experience in Mitch also revealed the importance of working with both the public and the private sector in response to a natural disaster. USAID's Caribbean hurricane experience emphasizes the need for speed, self-help and what we call "building back better." To support people in their efforts to quickly recover, we build and resume their path of sustainable development, put them in a better development to mitigate against future disasters.

The need for flexibility in development strategies and implementation instruments has resulted in a new development at our Agency which we call the "crisis modifier clause" in our agreements. This is now part of our strategy that enables us to expeditiously reprogram funds in an emergency setting.

As a result, USAID is able to quickly launch initial reconstruction activities that have melded seamlessly with the hurricane implementation program. That's a lot of words to say that we are able to, with our agreements, to move funds very quickly and save bureaucratic steps to get the resources necessary on the ground.

We are also taking advantage of working with organizations. We already have a history and presence in the disaster area that was key to moving quickly forward in Haiti. We were able to start up the Haiti Tropical Storm Jeanne reconstruction recovery program by working with experienced nongovernmental organizations and contractors that had successfully and previously implemented large scale programs in the affected areas. This really helped to coordinate and ensure implementation of program activities particularly given the critical security challenge in Haiti.

It is a place I have personally visited and gone to see following Tropical Storm Jeanne. There were very effective and very, very fast recovery efforts under way.

Strengthening the capacity of countries, as noted by the Members of the Committee, is also important to respond to disasters and important in hurricane belt regions in Guatemala. The national coordinator for disaster response, called CONRED in Guatemala, is the equivalent of our FEMA. It manages the country's hurricane response efforts. CONRED's ability to effectively respond has been greatly enhanced by my colleague here who will speak to it, Tim Callaghan, from the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). Over the last several years OFDA has provided the necessary institution building and technical assistance and capabilities for CONRED and other local relief institutions in that country to respond to disasters of this magnitude by planning and carrying out seminars and training courses now to deal with an emergency situation and to work on mitigation efforts as well as nationwide emergency drills.

This continued USAID assistance to CONRED has enabled the organization to respond effectively to the current emergencies in the affected areas. For example, heavy rain in this current month of June in this area has washed out major sections of major roads in Guatemala. So it is an example of something that is working as we speak.

In terms of preparation for the next hurricane season which I know is on your mind, Mr. Chairman, in Jamaica and Grenada we

have—I referred back to what we have done at USAID, which is our efforts to build back better, and that has resulted in better structures and incorporating hurricane-resistant building standards, which in the developing world is very important to mitigate damage.

More importantly, because of our reconstruction efforts in these islands, there is an increased community-level education, particularly in Grenada and Jamaica, on hurricane reduction methods which will protect homes and businesses from catastrophic loss. The terrible news is that these countries have experienced these storms; the good news is that we are working with the local communities and the government to learn from this to mitigate damages.

In Haiti, heavy rains in the Gonaives area last October tested the disaster mitigation groups formed under what I referred to as the “USAID reconstruction project.” Flooding was minimal as these groups successfully utilized what they had learned in cleaning out storm drains and implementing disaster plans elsewhere. Building on this, USAID has provided a grant to the United Nations Development Programme to develop a national system for disaster risk and response management with the Haitian Directorate for Civil Protection, and my colleague Tim Callaghan can speak more about this.

Departmental and local response communities are in place and have been equipped and trained in Haiti. Recently a disaster assessment team was successfully deployed to assess the recent damages in Port-de-Paix. The national public information structure is being revised on lessons learned in the past and mechanisms for relying information to the field are being expanded. UNDP is also working with the United States Government to install its flood early warning system and with a monitoring system at the local and international level and this is all with Haitian staff.

Very briefly, in the eastern Caribbean, USAID has worked with the Organizations for Eastern Caribbean States to identify low cost, doable landslide mitigation approaches in St. Lucia, Dominica and St. Vincent to install low-cost drainage, roof guttering and management of slope stability in the communities. These are real tangible mitigation efforts that are ongoing.

This was accomplished by the distribution of public materials for the population at large, and Grenada and St. Lucia supported a public education and training activity to support the promotion and enforcement. This is very important for hurricane resistant housing construction standards in both Grenada and St. Lucia.

USAID has provided assistance to the community based organizations on mitigation activities in Dominica. This is a grass roots effort that can reach virtually everyone on the island. The same applies for Dominica, Antigua/Barbuda and St. Kitts/Nevis. These pilot activities seek to mobilize community groups to implement mitigation measures based on their hazard maps.

We are working to promote a regional risk reduction policy agenda in the Caribbean that ensures that risk reduction is included in all of our programs. The objective is to use lessons learned from the various activities to provide a foundation for a dialogue with policy makers and identified priority makers. Again, that’s a lot of words

to say work on our regular development programs, mitigation prevention and disaster components are very key. To that end we have also retained two full-time risk reduction specialists to assist the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States as they move forward in development matters.

My time is very limited here, and I want to conclude just very, very quickly by mentioning the GAO report.

USAID completed many Caribbean disaster activities, but several challenges hampered our efforts. I know we will be talking about what has hampered our efforts, but we have learned from previous experiences we did have issues regarding security in Haiti. We did have issues with the ability of governments—we work with governments in both Jamaica and Grenada—to work effectively with us because they did not have the necessary personnel nor ability to do this. This is part of the lessons that we have learned.

I have asked, Mr. Chairman, that my full statement be made a part of the record, and I won't consume any more time, so I can have time for my colleague to expand on these programs, on these points and be able to answer your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Franco follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ADOLFO A. FRANCO, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I am pleased to have the opportunity to discuss USAID's disaster assistance in the Central American and the Caribbean regions. USAID has played an important role in providing humanitarian, reconstruction, and disaster preparation and mitigation assistance to these regions. Over the past several years, these regions have experienced a number of natural disasters including hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes. USAID, along with other USG organizations, has been able to assist these regions by providing both relief and reconstruction assistance. Today, I would like to share with you USAID's experience with assisting hurricane affected countries over the past several years, as well as the lessons we have learned which will better prepare our own country for the 2006 hurricane season.

#### BACKGROUND

##### *Hurricanes Mitch and Georges*

In September and October 1998, two hurricanes—Georges and Mitch—successfully battered the Caribbean and Central America, leaving more than 19,000 dead or missing, displacing over 3 million people and causing more than \$8.5 billion in damage. The Dominican Republic bore the brunt of Georges—though en route the hurricane had pounded Puerto Rico and the Eastern Caribbean Island, and continued on to wreak havoc in Haiti, Cuba, and the Bahamas.

Hurricane Mitch, the deadliest and most devastating Atlantic hurricane since 1780, struck Central America, producing more than six inches of rain in less than a week, mostly over Honduras. The heavy rainfall caused flooding and landslides that killed thousands of people; left tens of thousands homeless; and devastated infrastructure, agriculture, and local economies.

In the first few days after the hurricanes, USAID, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. military provided a massive emergency response. In just a few months, more than \$300 million in emergency assistance was delivered. In Central America, the distribution of relief often relied on helicopters to reach mountain communities isolated by wrecked and impassable roads and bridges. The United States set an unprecedented goal of completing its massive \$621 million reconstruction effort in just 30 months. USAID also coordinated \$96 million of programming with 12 other U.S. Government agencies, many with no recent experience working with USAID-sponsored programs in Latin America. Over 3 million people in stricken

areas benefited directly from U.S. reconstruction assistance, and millions more received indirect benefits.

#### *Caribbean Hurricanes*

In 2004 a series of Hurricanes—Charles, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne—swept through the Caribbean region. Hurricane Ivan, with winds reaching 145 miles per hour, first struck Grenada on September 7, 2004, causing roughly \$831.5 million in damage. On September 10–11, 2004, Hurricane Ivan continued its path of destruction setting down on the island of Jamaica. The heavy rains and strong winds caused significant human suffering and economic losses. About 14 percent of the total population, or nearly 370,000 persons, were directly affected, and economic losses were significant. On September 17–18, 2004, yet another storm developed in the Caribbean,—Tropical Storm Jeanne—which struck Haiti. The heavy rains ravaged the northwest section of Haiti creating massive flash floods that claimed the lives of nearly 3,000 people and affected an estimated 300,000 through the loss of homes, schools, health posts, crops, and livelihoods.

The United States responded quickly by providing emergency relief. In October 2004, Congress passed a supplemental appropriation of \$100 million for additional hurricane reconstruction activities in the Caribbean. USAID led the U.S. funded assistance, which was given primarily to the three Caribbean nations that were the most badly damaged by the hurricanes: Grenada (\$42 million), Haiti (\$38 million), and Jamaica (\$18 million). Additionally, \$2 million was programmed for other affected islands in the Caribbean.

USAID assistance to Jamaica and Grenada focused on restoring people's livelihoods, addressing shelter needs, repairing damaged schools, and business recovery, while reducing Jamaica and Grenada's vulnerability to natural disasters in the future. In Haiti, USAID assisted affected communities by rebuilding their physical infrastructure and livelihoods, as well as working with communities to decrease their vulnerability to future floods.

#### *Hurricane Stan*

Last year, an unprecedented 13 hurricanes successively battered countries in the Caribbean Basin. Five of those—including Hurricane Stan—were particularly deadly, devastating parts of Mexico, Central America, and several Caribbean islands. By November 2005, more than 800 people had lost their lives and a half million individuals had been displaced. The region sustained more than a billion dollars in damages, affecting homes, clinics, and schools. Livelihoods were severely interrupted as the storms created major setbacks in agriculture and transportation systems.

On October 4, Hurricane Stan made landfall in Mexico and generated separate tropical storms across southern Mexico and Central America. Stan spawned torrential rains that lasted over five days, causing widespread and severe flooding and deadly mudslides. USAID and other U. S. Government organizations responded quickly with assistance to affected countries. USAID provided over \$2 million for emergency and reconstruction activities in Mexico and El Salvador. In Guatemala, the hardest hit country, USAID provided some \$9.3 million in emergency assistance in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Stan. The Agency also reprogrammed \$1 million in food aid that was already in country and provided another \$4 million to the World Food Program for additional food assistance. As a result, over 500,000 victims in Stan-affected Guatemalan communities benefited from food assistance. OFDA grants for NGO partners totaling \$3 million provided emergency health services, water and sanitation, and shelter to families in affected communities.

#### LESSONS LEARNED

Central America and the Caribbean regions are in the hurricane belt and severe storms and hurricanes will be the norm and not the exception. USAID is building upon its lessons learned in previous hurricane programs to help mitigate the impact of future hurricanes, as well as to facilitate rapid and efficient hurricane relief and reconstruction assistance. USAID's Hurricane Mitch experience revealed the importance of having administrative, programmatic, and financial mechanisms in place that would allow USAID to expeditiously design and initiate large-scale infrastructure and rehabilitation programs, while at the same time providing emergency relief and initial reconstruction assistance. It also revealed the importance of working with both public and private sector groups in response to natural disasters. USAID's Caribbean hurricane experience emphasized speed, self-help, and "building back better" to support people in their efforts to quickly recover, rebuild, and resume their path to sustainable development.

Building back better became the mantra in the Mitch and Georges Hurricane Reconstruction program, when the United States as well as international partners



agreed on an approach that would not simply replace what was destroyed but would build it back using techniques and standards that would make the structure better able to withstand damage. This approach was also used in the Caribbean Hurricane reconstruction programs. In Jamaica and Grenada, USAID repaired schools to their pre-Ivan condition or better in compliance with building codes and hurricane resistance standards. In Haiti, USAID provided grants to households to undertake their own repairs and provided technical assistance and training to introduce better construction techniques restoration grants as well as created a cash-for-work program to help those to decrease their vulnerability to future floods.

The need for flexibility in development strategies and implementation instruments resulted in USAID including a "Crisis Modifier" clause enabled the Agency to quickly reprogram funds in this emergency situation. In response to the hurricanes, this approach enabled USAID to provide immediate assistance to address priority sectors in priority geographic areas by reprogramming a total of \$10.5 million for Jamaica and Grenada and \$11.8 million for Haiti. As a result, USAID was able to quickly launch initial reconstruction activities that melded seamlessly with the implementation of the one-year Caribbean Hurricane Reconstruction program when it came on stream in December. This action was especially important in Grenada where there was no USAID mission. In Jamaica, this was also important, as there was no existing relationship with the Ministry of Agriculture and no existing construction-related activities.

Taking advantage of working with organizations that already had a history and presence in the disaster areas was key in moving forward quickly. In Haiti, USAID was able to start up Haiti's Tropical Storm Jeanne Recovery program by working with selected non-government organizations and contractors that had a history of both working in the country and the affected areas, successfully implementing large-scale programs. This helped to strengthen coordination and ensured implementation of program activities, which was particularly critical given the security challenges in Haiti.

USAID also recognizes the importance of involving community based organizations in program implementation from its experience with Hurricane Georges. In Haiti, USAID worked with a local civil society organization, which was one of the few functioning groups in Gonaives, immediately after the flooding. The civil society organization became USAID's program partner and liaison on community issues, security, and sustainable maintenance efforts. The use of community-based organizations provided a means to mobilize the local population rapidly to execute short-term employment generation activities such as drainage canal cleanup, tertiary road repair, and the building of protection structures to prevent ravine erosion. In Jamaica, non-government organizations played a significant role in the USAID-funded job training and housing repair programs, thereby allowing assistance to be provided more effectively at the grassroots level.

Working with the private sector produced benefits when USAID encouraged their participation in the Hurricane Stan recovery and reconstruction efforts, especially in Guatemala. In January 2005, USAID had started a multi-million-dollar activity to fund public-private alliances to greatly increase access to basic health, nutrition, and education services in Guatemala. Established in January 2005, Alianzas represents a USAID commitment of \$9 million dollars that is leveraging a contribution of more than \$12 million from the private sector. By the time Stan swept into Guatemala, Alianzas was already well positioned to help coordinate a quick and impressive response by the private sector and the Guatemalan government for storm-ravaged communities. USAID authorized Alianzas to reprogram \$1 million dollars in its portfolio to disaster relief for projects focused on clean water, rehabilitation of wells, and disease prevention and management. U.S. corporations and private donors have contributed another \$2 million.

Sufficient USAID staff with the right skills mix to implement reconstruction programs was another important lesson USAID addressed. This was particularly challenging in Grenada because USAID does not have a mission in that country. In order to get the hurricane reconstruction program under way quickly, a private U.S. firm was hired to provide a full range of management oversight and monitoring support. The structure created by the Mission was highly flexible and could respond very quickly to changing needs throughout the program. In addition to serving an essential function of project oversight and day-to-day interaction with the Government of Grenada, the contracted firm also managed \$8 million of support directly for the Government of Grenada. This included staffing a new Grenadian Agency for Reconstruction and Development with both short-term and long-term technical experts, program and financial advisors, and managing an accounting firm to assist with the management of reimbursements of the Government of Grenada utilities.

Although there were challenges with using this approach, it allowed USAID to quickly and successfully implement a hurricane reconstruction program.

Strengthening the capacity of countries to respond to disasters is an important component in hurricane belt regions. In Guatemala, the National Coordinator for Disaster Response (CONRED), which is the equivalent of our FEMA, managed that country's Hurricane Stan relief response. CONRED's ability to respond effectively was greatly enhanced by OFDA, which for several years has strengthened the capability of CONRED and local relief institutions to respond to a disaster of this magnitude by planning and carrying out seminars and training courses in disaster response and mitigation, as well as by coordinating nationwide emergency drills. After Mitch a new Emergency Command Center had been built that included state of the art technology and was staffed by disaster relief experts representing social and infrastructure sectors and Government of Guatemala security forces. This continued USAID assistance to CONRED has enabled the organization to effectively respond to the current emergency conditions in areas affected by heavy June rains that have washed out sections of major roads that lead to Guatemala's ports.

#### PREPARATIONS FOR THE NEXT HURRICANE SEASON

In Jamaica and Grenada, USAID's approach of "building back better" has resulted in structures that incorporate hurricane resistant building standards. More importantly, as a result of USAID's hurricane reconstruction work, there has been an increase in community level education in Grenada and Jamaica on hurricane risk reduction methods to protect homes and businesses from catastrophic loss. Also in Jamaica, USAID worked with an NGO partner to develop a disaster mitigation quick-response plan for fisher folk, addressing safety-at-sea procedures, identification of safe harbors and protection of equipment in order to minimize losses.

In Haiti, heavy rains in the Gonaïves area during the passage of Tropical Storm Alpha last October tested the disaster mitigation groups formed under the USAID reconstruction project. Flooding was minimal as they successfully utilized what they had learned in cleaning out storm drains and implementing disaster plans. Building on this, USAID has provided a grant to UNDP to develop a national system for disaster risk and response management with the Haitian Directorate for Civil Protection. Departmental and local response committees are in place and have been equipped and trained. A trained disaster assessment team was recently successfully deployed to assess the recent floods in Port-de-Paix. In addition, the national public information structure is being revised based on lessons learned, and mechanisms for relaying information in the field are being expanded. UNDP is also working with the USG, through the USGS, to install a flood early warning system in Fonds Verettes, with a monitoring system at the local, national, and international level, along with training of Haitian staff.

In the Eastern Caribbean, USAID worked with the Organization for Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) to identify low cost but doable landslide mitigation approaches in St. Lucia, Dominica, and St. Vincent such as the installation of low cost drainage, roof guttering, and management of slope stability in communities. This was accompanied by distribution of public awareness materials. In Grenada and St. Lucia, USAID has supported an OECS-led public education and training activity to support the promotion and enforcement of hurricane resistant housing construction standards in Grenada and St. Lucia. USAID has also provided assistance to expand an on-going OECS community-based mapping and mitigation activity in Dominica, Antigua/Barbuda, and St. Kitts/Nevis. These pilot activities seek to mobilize community groups to implement mitigation measures based on their hazard maps.

USAID has worked to promote a regional risk reduction policy agenda in the Caribbean by ensuring that risk reduction was included on the agenda of a variety of Caribbean forums and meetings. The objective was to use the lessons learned from various country activities to provide a foundation for a dialogue with policy makers and identification of priority policy action items. To that end, USAID has supported two full time risk reduction specialists to assist the OECS in establishing the dialogue and formulating the agenda; held a workshop in Jamaica on risk reduction and disaster preparedness for regional partners; participated in a regional risk reduction insurance meeting held in Dominican Republic; documented successful working models in smaller islands of "doable" actions that a small island government can put in place to reduce their risk from natural disasters; and undertaken a lessons-learned study of Grenada to identify key risk reduction approaches that worked, did not work, or could have worked to reduce Grenada's losses from Hurricane Ivan.

In addition, USAID has prepared for the 2006 Hurricane season by incorporating disaster mitigation activities as an integral part of its sustainable development pro-

gramming. For example, since Mexico's steep terrain is prone to landslides and floods during the seasonal rains, USAID is helping Mexico to improve the management of rural areas and conservation of natural vegetation in many of the vulnerable areas of Mexico, including along the coast of Chiapas. In Haiti, environmental degradation is a root cause of the flooding that occurs after heavy rains. USAID's Hillside Agriculture Program teaches farmers erosion control techniques such as building erosion control structures to stabilize the soil and best practices in natural resource management. In addition, through USAID's Food for Peace activities, farmers are learning to manage watersheds, build soil-retaining structures, and plant and protect trees in order to restore the environment and prevent flooding. Additionally, OFDA manages a Regional Disaster Assistance Program which provides risk reduction training throughout the year to local disaster agencies in program countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

#### CONCLUSION

While Caribbean and Central America countries located in the hurricane belt cannot prevent hurricanes, they can decrease the negative impact these hurricanes can have within their countries. USAID continues to work with these countries to raise public awareness of effective disaster risk reduction approaches designed to reduce the loss of lives and catastrophic damage.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my remarks. I welcome any questions that you or Subcommittee Members may have.

Mr. BURTON. You always do an outstanding job, Mr. Franco, in covering the subject matter for the hearing. What I hope in the future, though, is that we will try to keep the opening statements to 5 minutes if we can, and the reason for that is because one of the most informative parts is the question and answers and you are very well informed on all of these issues, and when you give your opening statement, you go into all of these things and sometimes they rush past me and I do not have a chance to write down the questions and I would like to be able to get to the questions more quickly.

Mr. Callaghan.

#### **TESTIMONY OF MR. TIMOTHY M. CALLAGHAN, SENIOR REGIONAL ADVISOR FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. CALLAGHAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee. It is an honor to appear before you this afternoon. As Senior Regional Advisor for the Latin America and Caribbean Advisor team, USAID, of Foreign Disaster Assistance, I've been intimately involved in USAID hurricane preparedness and response efforts for the past 6 years. Today I welcome the opportunity to discuss our recent hurricane response efforts and preparations for the 2006 hurricane season.

As you are aware, natural disasters are a constant threat to the Latin American and Caribbean region, and USAID has long been involved in preparing for and responding to the effects of hurricanes. We are engaged in year round activities to ensure that when a country gets hit by a hurricane, we and our partners are prepared to prepare rapid life-saving assistance.

The 2004 and 2005 hurricane seasons were among the most active on record, requiring an unprecedented USAID response in more than 10 countries. USAID/OFDA provided \$10.5 million in humanitarian assistance, deployed more than 50 staff members to affected areas.

According to NOAA, the upcoming season is forecast to be just as intense. USAID preparedness and mitigation programs work to reduce the loss of life and lessen the economic impact of disasters. USAID funds multiple programs to identify, prioritize and reduce risks throughout the Caribbean and Central America.

USAID also supports programs that build upon and strengthen the capacity of established national regional institutions. One example of USAID capacity building is the Regional Disaster Assistance Program (RDAP) which provides instruction in disaster management concepts, training methods and technical disciplines such as search and rescue, shelter management and mitigation. Since the program was established in 1989, more than 41,000 people in 26 countries have been trained.

Many of these individuals have assumed leadership roles in national disaster management organizations and presently conduct training in their own countries. In addition to preparedness and mitigation programs, we are engaged in a variety of activities preparing for hurricane response. We conduct extensive internal planning exercises, and coordinate with other USAID bureaus and U.S. Government agencies as well as with local disaster response officials and implementing partners.

This past April, OFDA brought together Washington and field based staff for our annual hurricane planning meeting. We used this meeting to discuss hurricane forecasts, tracking mechanisms and event triggers as well as response staffing, operating procedures, the status of OFDA stockpiles and coordination efforts. To promote collaboration and information sharing, the OFDA/CAC team also conducted hurricane briefings in Washington for USAID's Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, the U.S. State Department, U.S. Department of Defense, the National Security Council and now here in Congress.

OFDA has a team of Five Regional Advisors based in Costa Rica and Barbados as well as a network of consultants throughout the region. In May and June 2006, Regional Advisors traveled to United States Missions in the Caribbean and Central America to provide an overview of best practices. Regional Advisors and consultants also frequently meet with local disaster response officials and implementing partners. To date in 2006, Regional Advisors have met with disaster response officials from 13 countries.

OFDA has also held coordination meetings with implementing partners and other major donors. We have also actively engaged in sharing U.S. Government response information with the general public.

On May 23rd, 2006, USAID held its second annual press conference in Miami, and it was attended by press from the United States and local Latin American and Haitian communities and humanitarian partners.

USAID has access to a number of response options during the hurricane season. In addition to OFDA Regional Advisors, consultants are often based in country or close by and remain in constant contact with local disaster response officials. OFDA's regional offices provide regular and timely storm monitoring. In cases where a country is in a direct path of a storm, staff and relief supplies may be deployed prior to the storm to provide assistance and con-

duct damage assessments. In the event that a hurricane causes significant damage, USAID may deploy an assistant team or Disaster Assistance Response Team, or as we call them, DART teams, composed of OFDA Regional Advisors, consultants, and OFDA/Washington staff.

OFDA also maintains agreements with other government agencies, including U.S. Forest Service, NOAA and CDC, U.S. Geological Survey, Fairfax County and L.A. County search and rescue teams. In addition, USAID frequently coordinates with the U.S. military, especially during the hurricane season, and maintains an OFDA liaison officer at SOUTHCOM in Miami.

In advance of the hurricane season, USAID replenishes stockpiled relief commodities such as plastic sheeting, blankets, water containers and health supplies in Miami for rapid deployment in the region. For the 2006 hurricane season, OFDA has stockpiled enough to serve the needs of 100,000 people. Once OFDA identifies needs, we can dispatch stockpiled relief supplies to the affected area within 24 hours. OFDA also maintains an airplane standby contract in the Caribbean. It is in Barbados to conduct aerial assessments.

Following each hurricane season, USAID convenes a lessons-learned meeting with participants from OFDA and relevant United States Government agencies to review the hurricane response in Latin America and the Caribbean. Lessons learned are then incorporated into planning activities for the following hurricane season.

Last year lessons learned included expansion of publicity for U.S. Government assistance and emphasis on cash for work activities in certain disaster situations and continued use of staff search capacity.

In closing, USAID is engaged in a variety of activities to respond to the effect of hurricanes in Latin America and the Caribbean. For more than 20 years our work in the region has reduced the effects of hurricanes as well as increased the ability of affected countries to respond. Through focus efforts on preparedness and mitigation, we are also making progress in the ability of Latin American countries to take the lead on disaster response. When hurricanes of extreme magnitude occur, USAID remains poised to assist the governments of affected countries to respond to the needs of their people.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I welcome any questions that you and other Members of the Subcommittee may have. And again, I thank you. It is an honor to be here this afternoon.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Callaghan follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. TIMOTHY M. CALLAGHAN, SENIOR REGIONAL ADVISOR FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Subcommittee, it is an honor to appear before you this afternoon. As Senior Regional Advisor for the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) team in USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), I have been intimately involved in USAID's hurricane preparedness and response efforts for the past six years. Today, I welcome the opportunity to discuss our recent hurricane response efforts as well as preparations for the 2006 hurricane season.

As you are aware, natural disasters are a constant threat to the LAC region, and USAID has long been involved in preparing for and responding to the effects of hur-

ricanes. We support activities that mitigate the effects of natural disasters and strengthen the capacity of local governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to respond effectively. USAID/OFDA offices are engaged in year-round activities to prepare for the hurricane season, including coordination activities with U.S. Government (USG) agencies, local disaster response officials, and international organization (IO) and NGO partners. All of these activities ensure that, when a hurricane hits, we and all of our partners are prepared to provide rapid, life-saving assistance to survivors.

#### INCREASED HURRICANE ACTIVITY

The 2004 and 2005 hurricane seasons were among the most active on record, requiring unprecedented multi-country USAID responses. During 2004, USAID responded to four hurricanes and one tropical storm in six countries—the Bahamas, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba. During 2005, USAID responded to five hurricanes and one tropical storm in ten countries—Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, Mexico, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Haiti, Grenada, the Bahamas, and Cuba. In 2004 and 2005, USAID/OFDA provided a total of \$10.5 million in humanitarian assistance and deployed more than 50 staff members to affected areas.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), 2006 is forecast to bring 13–16 named storms, including 8–10 hurricanes, 4–6 of them intense. By contrast, the historical average is for 11 named storms and 6 hurricanes, with 2 major hurricanes. In 2005, the Atlantic hurricane season contained a record 28 named storms, including 15 hurricanes, with 7 major hurricanes. A major hurricane has maximum sustained winds of 111 miles per hour and is at least a Category 3 on the Saffir-Simpson scale.

#### PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION ACTIVITIES

Although no amount of preparation can prevent the devastating effects of hurricanes, disaster preparedness and mitigation programs can work to reduce the loss of human life and lessen the economic impacts caused by disasters. USAID funds multiple programs that work to identify, prioritize, and reduce risks throughout the Caribbean and Central America. USAID also promotes local and national self-sufficiency in disaster preparedness and management. USAID's programs build upon and strengthen the capacity of established national and regional disaster management institutions, many of which have the ability to meet most emergency needs after an event.

In order to help local and national authorities develop the capabilities needed to respond to natural disasters and to promote their self-sufficiency, USAID supports a year-round Regional Disaster Assistance Program (RDAP) for countries in the region. The courses provide instruction in disaster management concepts, training methods, and technical disciplines such as search and rescue, shelter management, and mitigation activities. Participants are provided with the knowledge and skills required to replicate the training program. As part of the RDAP, every year OFDA/LAC develops country plans for each program country to identify priorities and lay out a strategy and training activities for the following year.

Since the RDAP was established in 1989, more than 41,000 people in 26 countries have been trained and 3,800 participants certified as active instructors. Many of these individuals have assumed leadership roles in national disaster management organizations and presently conduct training in their own countries using their own resources. The RDAP is a prime example of how USAID investments in training and capacity building have paid off. Following Hurricane Mitch, RDAP trainings with Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador have significantly reduced the need for outside disaster management assistance. In Costa Rica, in particular, disaster relief officials are now largely able to respond to emergencies without international assistance.

Some other examples of preparedness and mitigation activities include a regional emergency health preparedness program, a Disaster Mitigation Facility for the Caribbean (DMFC), and a Disaster Risk Management Program in Haiti. Since 1998, USAID/OFDA has supported Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) efforts to promote improved disaster preparedness and response in the health sector, including production and dissemination of training materials and health guidelines, support for developing building codes for health and water facilities, and health surveillance for local communities in the immediate post-disaster period. Since 2000, USAID/OFDA has supported Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) efforts to establish the DMFC to promote sustainable development through reduced risk and losses from natural hazards. Finally, USAID/OFDA has supported recent disaster response

simulations which have taken place in Central America, including Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.

#### SEASONAL PRE-PLANNING

We are engaged annually in a variety of activities to prepare for the hurricane season, many of which revolve around sharing information within USAID and the USG as well as with local disaster relief officials, NGO and IO partners, and the general public. The following is a summary of USAID/OFDA's planning, coordination, and information outreach efforts in the last few months.

In April 2006, our regional team met with USAID/OFDA staff in Washington for our annual hurricane planning meeting. Washington team members include specialists in programming, information management and logistics as well as a military liaison specialist. USAID used this meeting to discuss hurricane forecasts, tracking mechanisms, and event triggers, as well as specific response staffing and standard operating procedures, ongoing coordination efforts with SOUTHCOM in Miami, the status of USAID/OFDA stockpiles in Miami, and upcoming information outreach efforts within the USG and with NGO partners. Following the meeting, USAID issued a cable related to hurricane preparedness to coincide with the official start of hurricane season on June 1.

On May 23, 2006, USAID held its second annual press conference in Miami, Florida, and released a public statement on hurricane preparedness activities to increase public awareness of the USG's role in humanitarian assistance in the LAC region. Press from the U.S., as well as from local Latin American and Haitian communities, attended. Humanitarian partners including Americas Relief and Food for the Poor were also present.

USAID/OFDA has a team of five Regional Advisors for LAC based in San José, Costa Rica, and Bridgetown, Barbados, as well as a network of consultants throughout the LAC region. The LAC team frequently meets with local disaster response officials and NGO and IO partners throughout the region to ensure successful coordination during the hurricane season. These meetings reinforce key messages about hurricane planning and safety and foster relationships among USAID, host country governments, and civil society groups. In preparation for the 2006 hurricane season, USAID/OFDA Regional Advisors have met with disaster response officials from at least 13 countries throughout Central America and the Caribbean as well as representatives from PAHO, the U.N., the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the American Red Cross, World Vision, CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and Save the Children (SC), among others. This is in addition to coordination meetings with other major donors, including the European Union, the U.K, Canada, and Japan.

In May and June 2006, LAC Regional Advisors traveled to USAID Missions in the Caribbean and Central America, including Haiti, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Bahamas, Barbados, Costa Rica, Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Trinidad and Tobago and briefed Emergency Action Committees, including the Mission Disaster Relief Officer (MDRO), on best practices during a hurricane. (Meetings in Belize, Mexico and El Salvador are scheduled for July.) A Mission preparedness briefing provides an overview of USAID's capabilities and procedures during a disaster response, allows USAID and the Mission to review and revise the Mission Disaster Relief Plans (MDRPs), ensures the Missions are as prepared as possible for the hurricane season, and establishes a relationship between USAID/OFDA/LAC and the MDRO, who serves as the Mission's principal point of contact in the event of a disaster. Also in May, a separate meeting with Central America and Mexico MDROs took place in El Salvador, providing USAID and MDROs a chance to discuss lessons learned from the 2005 hurricane season.

From June 26–29, 2006 to promote collaboration and information sharing, the USAID/OFDA/LAC team is conducting hurricane preparedness briefings in Washington for USAID's regional bureau for Latin American and the Caribbean (USAID/LAC), the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Defense, the National Security Council and Congress. To advance understanding of USAID's hurricane preparedness efforts among emergency response officials, I represented USAID at the National Hurricane Conference in Orlando, Florida, on April 11, 2006. The conference was attended by disaster management officials and representatives from all over Latin America and the Caribbean.

#### USAID DISASTER RESPONSE RESOURCES

In addition to USAID/OFDA Regional Advisors, consultants are often based in-country or close by and as a result maintain close contact with local disaster response officials. Throughout the hurricane season, USAID/OFDA's Regional Offices

provide regular and timely storm monitoring and send email alerts to missions and embassies via relevant MDROs when a storm is developing. When a storm could potentially make landfall, USAID contacts the relevant MDROs by telephone to discuss preparations. At the same time, the team in Washington provides daily email alerts for decision makers in USAID/OFDA, State, and USAID/LAC.

USAID/OFDA Regional Advisors and consultants are available for immediate deployment to disaster sites throughout the region. In cases where a country is in the direct path of a storm, staff and relief supplies may be pre-deployed prior to the storm in order to immediately provide assistance and conduct humanitarian assessments. In the event that a hurricane causes significant damage, USAID may deploy an assessment team or a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), composed of USAID/OFDA Regional Advisors, OFDA/LAC consultants, and/or USAID/OFDA/Washington staff who provide expertise in areas such as health, water and sanitation, and shelter as well as administration, communications, information, logistics, and military liaison services.

USAID/OFDA also maintains agreements with other USG agencies and organizations with expertise that can help support disaster responses. These include the U.S. Forest Service, NOAA, U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC), U.S. Geological Survey, and Fairfax County (VA) and L.A. County (CA) Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams. In addition, USAID frequently coordinates with the U.S. military, as military assets are frequently best positioned to respond when integral infrastructure has been destroyed. To facilitate communication between USAID and DOD, a USAID/OFDA/OLU representative is stationed in Miami to liaise with SOUTHCOM throughout the hurricane season.

In advance of the hurricane season, USAID replenishes stockpiled relief commodities—such as plastic sheeting, blankets, water containers, and health supplies—in Miami, Florida, for rapid deployment in the region. Items such as water bladders and chainsaws have been added in recent years. For the 2006 hurricane season, we have stocked a 30,000 square foot warehouse with relief supplies, or enough to serve the needs of approximately 100,000 affected people. By locating commodities in Miami, USAID can dispatch items in a timely fashion and via commercial air-freight at a fraction of the cost of chartering private or military aircraft. Once USAID/OFDA Regional Advisors identify needs, we can dispatch stocked relief supplies to the affected areas within a day and procured supplies within approximately 48 hours. USAID/OFDA also maintains an airplane stand-by contract in the Caribbean and upon request is able to charter a plane to conduct aerial assessments.

#### LESSONS LEARNED

Following each hurricane season, USAID convenes a lessons learned meeting, with participants from OFDA and relevant USG agencies, to review the hurricane response in LAC. Lessons learned are then incorporated into planning activities for the following hurricane season. USAID's current disaster response options, as well as its preparedness and mitigation portfolio, are the cumulative result of the integration of lessons learned over the years. Last year, lessons learned included an expansion of publicity for USG assistance, an emphasis on cash for work activities in certain disaster situations, and continued use of surge capacity.

#### CONCLUSION

In closing, USAID is engaged in a variety of activities to respond to the effects of hurricanes in Latin America and the Caribbean. For more than 20 years, our work in the region has worked to reduce the effects of hurricanes while increasing the ability of affected countries to respond. Through focused efforts on preparedness and mitigation, we are already seeing progress in the ability of LAC countries to take the lead on disaster response. When hurricanes of extreme magnitude occur, USAID remains poised to assist the governments of affected countries to respond to the needs of their people.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I welcome any questions that you and other Members of the Subcommittee may have. Thank you.

Mr. BURTON. Mr. Engel has to run to the Floor because he has an amendment pending. I am going to yield to him first.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it. I am going to have to run. I apologize, I did want to hear the excellent testimony by both gentlemen.

Mr. Franco, let me quickly start with you. Obviously we have seen feelings where the United States is beaten up all over the



world, and we face a public diplomacy crisis through most of the world, including in our own hemisphere. I was wondering if you could tell us what measures USAID takes to ensure that U.S. humanitarian assistance provided both directly and through many partners such as NGOs are identified as U.S. Government assistance. Are U.S. Government labels mandated and also what measures are taken to improve the U.S. image among recipients of U.S. disaster assistance to make sure the general populations know of the generosity of the American people in the time of crisis?

Mr. FRANCO. Thank you very much. First, this is a major initiative of the previous Administrator and this Administration, and the Administrator set up an entire office called the Branding Office. We have changed our logo. Our logo is USAID and below it in 127 languages it says, "From the American people." But one of the things that Deputy Secretary Armitage told me on occasion was that he wanted these bags of food and all of the other assistance not simply to have a logo like it did in the past with the handshakes that we have seen and an emblem that not everyone recognized, but that it very carefully specified in the language of the country where we work that it is from the American people. So that is a priority at our Agency.

In addition to that, there is a major public diplomacy effort led by Under Secretary Hughes, who has been to our region as well as other regions in the world, to ensure that there is a very concerted effort beyond just the labeling, but also on the press release in indigenous languages to ensure that the countries receiving assistance know it comes from the American people.

Mr. ENGEL. What coordination mechanisms exist with international donors, including the UN? How do we ensure there is no duplication in the humanitarian assistance and who are the major players in the Americas?

Mr. FRANCO. Let me say first on the branding issue we have quite elaborate guidelines because one of the issues in the past—we work with implementing agencies and other international organizations—is they often—and they do good work, but they often—90 percent of the moneys are provided by the taxpayer, but yet it simply says I won't name anyone else but it will say the NGO's name. So now we have an elaborate deal on branding that we have to be given credit even when it is not provided by our own employees.

But with respect to international coordination, we normally approach this with what we call a "donors coordinating group." We do not want—and often this is a problem—duplication. We want to make sure that expertise is utilized in the best manner so we have an in-country—we often have Washington meetings as well, but we have an in-country meeting of all donors working on the ground, not necessarily once they receive assistance from us, although they are included, but other donors that are working with their own resources.

The chief players in this are often, in terms of disaster assistance, UN organizations, the IMO, so they are UN organizations. They are foreign governments and the private sector.

Mr. CALLAGHAN. In the eastern Caribbean there is a group called Eastern Caribbean Donor Group, which USAID is a part of. And

there are ongoing meetings, activities, and plans in place for what different groups would bring to the table. Some of those groups are the Canadians, ECHO, the International Federation of the Red Cross, the UN, ourselves, the Pan American Health Organization. So those groups work together throughout the year. If a storm is approaching, they have meetings as the storm approaches and if an event does happen, U.S.—the point I talked about earlier that we would go up in and do additional assessments, and then the groups would work closely together. There is a lot of close coordination that goes on. In other countries, again, there are usually donor meetings where the key donors get together early on. I think one of the things that we work very hard on is to avoid duplication of anything that will happen during an event.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it.

Mr. BURTON. Good luck with your amendment, Mr. Engel.

In addition to hurricanes, I have a concern about the warning system for a tsunami like we saw in Indonesia. In the Caribbean or in the area around the United States and in this area, do we have an early warning system that would show that the place and the bottom of the ocean are moving around, and that there might be a tsunami?

Mr. CALLAGHAN. Yes. Currently USGS and NOAA are working together on the technical side with buoys, and so forth, and the program is, I believe, just started at this point to provide warnings to governments. USAID/OFDA is trying to complement that work more at the community level so when a warning does come in, the communities are then prepared to take that information and go forward. At this point, as far as how operational, all the technical work that USGS and NOAA has done I believe it is an ongoing project that has been going on since the tsunami.

Mr. Burton. Well, I do not think that answers my question.

Is the technical apparatus in place now that could warn the United States or these Caribbean islands or Latin American countries that a tsunami is possible or probable?

Mr. CALLAGHAN. I believe it is in place in the Caribbean, that again the USGS and NOAA have taken a lead on that.

Mr. BURTON. If you have further information on that, I would like to know. I know in the Far East they are in the process of building that kind of a system. I wondered if we had one.

Mr. FRANCO. Can I add to that? It is a little dated information. After the tsunami, I requested a briefing on our region up to the disaster in Indonesia and elsewhere and I have been told that although there is not one in place, the type of tsunami that was experienced in Asia and Indonesia, in the Caribbean area is unlikely because of the—the technical expert came in and talked to me, but he told me the type of tsunami that we saw in Asia could not be repeated in the Caribbean. It has to do more with the level of the water and where it would occur.

Mr. CALLAGHAN. I think that is correct.

Mr. FRANCO. So I've been told that phenomena cannot be replicated exactly. We can have high water. We can have disaster. We will provide more information to the Committee and what we are

doing on that. But the level of tsunami that we witnessed in Asia in the Caribbean Basin is from a technical standpoint—

Mr. BURTON. It is unlikely but you did have the warning system?

Mr. FRANCO. We do.

Mr. BURTON. One of the things that I have noticed when I've been down in the Caribbean over the years is that when there is a hurricane a lot of these homes are destroyed, but they are very flimsy and you talked about the reconstruction and what kind of materials you use. And there has been a number of places where I've been where a hurricane comes through or high winds come through and they knock down these tin roofed houses that are very poorly made and they rebuild them the same way. Another hurricane comes through and you're spending the same kind of money to replace the same kind of housing and it just does not make any sense.

Do we have specifications of when we are going to put USAID money into ensuring that if a house or building is torn down by a hurricane, it then has to be built to higher standards?

Mr. FRANCO. We certainly do, Mr. Chairman. And I have visited these sites personally and been briefed by the experts in Central America and the Caribbean. It is part of what I referred to in building back better. When we rebuild the homes that have been affected, destroyed or damaged, we rebuild hurricane resistant homes to the extent that that is possible. And what I mean by that is to the highest level possible. And I have seen the structures you are referring to, the ones that have survived the hurricane because they were not involved or they were able to withstand it for some reason, and I have seen the new construction. So our new construction is built to sustain storm damage to the level best that we can. It is a part of our efforts and our programs to ensure that part of the mitigation for future damage.

Mr. BURTON. Overall, how do you assess the state of preparedness among Central American and Caribbean countries to deal with hurricanes? Just give me a generic answer to that. Is it good? Bad?

Mr. CALLAGHAN. I think it is good. I think the last 2 years have created a lot of awareness. I think countries are paying a lot more attention. I think countries have done a lot more simulation exercises, so I think it has improved.

Mr. BURTON. Do you agree with that?

Mr. FRANCO. I would absolutely, yes. I have been in the position going on 5 years. I have seen a marked increase in mitigation efforts and improvement of codes and attention to this matter in the last 3 or 4 years. It is brought up by officials to me as part of our whole development strategy on a constant basis.

Mr. BURTON. Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

You know, the whole environment, deforestation, in particular in Haiti, as you know, is very, very high, and I just wonder if either one of you could tell me whether the Americans are doing anything in Haiti to protect or to rehabilitate the environment there. I know that the same storm that hit Haiti hit this Dominican Republic. In fact, when it hit Haiti, it had come down a bit in its velocity. There were thousands of people that died in Haiti with the mudslides,

whereas in the Dominican Republic one or two people died and it was the same storm, and it all can go back to the fact of the deforestation and the erosion in Haiti. They say it is 50 times higher than any other place in Latin America. So I wonder is there anything being done in our programs, USAID, in regard to reforestation?

Mr. FRANCO. Well, first of all, Mr. Payne, I have to tell you I cannot agree more. There is every indication in the course of environmental degradation, particularly in Haiti but even beyond Haiti, going back a number of years ago to Hurricane Mitch in Honduras that deforestation, particularly, and bad agricultural practices contribute significantly and have contributed significantly to the damage caused by these storms.

Now in Haiti, we do have an environmental program. It is—I mentioned earlier that all of our programs now and have for some time, but certainly it is a more important and salient issue now, but all of our programs take in mitigation and prevention strategies and one of them has to do with the environment that has to do with these storms. Unfortunately, and we do have an environmental program to bring in practices in Haiti on the agricultural side and alternatives for the environment. The environmental deforestation in Haiti is an economic problem which means these issues—we refer to them as grade development. We can talk about hurricanes and so forth. But the fact that we have deforestation in Haiti is because of the need that people have to eek out a livelihood. In other words, they cut the trees down and sell it for higher food. So we need to find other opportunities. We need to address that in the immediate short term, which is getting people to have some consciousness on some—get mitigation efforts in particular on the cultural side efforts to reforest. Haiti has been mixed. At best we are looking at vetiver, which is a grass that has taken hold in places in Asia where there has been significant deforestation and has really improved the environment, in particularly in Bangladesh and the Philippines. We have significant resources that we are putting to that end. It will be a long term process.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. It is disturbing because if it continues, really, the island will not be able to sustain any kind of livelihood, people, animals, and it has really been going on a long time. And another year or more, top soil continues to erode, eventually there will be, I do not know what is underneath, what you finally get, but it is going to be rock or—and so that is very serious.

Well, I hope that we could sort of step up some programs there.

Just another question though in another part of the Caribbean about Cuba.

How much U.S.—first of all, is I guess we are—we can assist Cuba if we decided that we wanted to. I mean there is no law that says that we cannot help Cuba. I guess the first question and, if there is none, have we offered any assistance to Cuba. They get hit with these hurricanes just like everybody else. I guess they do not go around Communists. I guess they treat every—equal opportunity winds, you know. I know some people would say well, that is a Communist hurricane as opposed to democracy hurricane. Is there any way that we could help or do we help or does the law restrict us from helping?

Mr. FRANCO. Well, first, you are right. These storms do not differentiate on politics at all. As a consequence, President Bush has offered assistance to Cuba. And we have—I think, Tim, you were ready to go to Cuba at one point last year. But let me say a couple of things about assistance to Cuba and the assistance we actually have provided to Cubans.

We do not provide assistance to the Government of Cuba, and we will not provide assistance to entities controlled by the Cuban Government. And we assess that very carefully. We have had disaster declarations by our interest section in Havana and we have offered, I think, double the amount for—if I recall, \$100,000 was in that conference call with you on it. And we would be delighted to provide assistance to the people of Cuba. But we do want to make sure with regard to North Korea or other places where we do provide assistance where that assistance has been affected by the storms—one of the things we wanted Tim to do was to travel from Costa Rica to do what we do every place else, and that is he alluded to these assessment teams and DART teams. We send them everywhere, by the way. When we assess the damage, that you want information when we request appropriations and additional supplemental resources, they are based on assessment of experts, technical experts, not political people.

We go in and see where the damage is and we cost it out to the best of our ability.

With respect to Cuba, and I was involved in this decision, we wanted to treat Cuba like we treated everyone else; that is, an ability to go there and assess and then provide the resources if the independent channels and independent channels or the organizations we work with throughout the world are able to work freely in Cuba. Unfortunately, the Cuban Government has not accepted those terms and conditions which are the terms and conditions we apply in every other instance throughout the world. The President is fully committed to helping the people of Cuba and we have provided through nongovernmental organizations in the United States a goal of \$200,000 for the disasters and that is money that we provide to organizations outside of Cuba that can bring supplies and other humanitarian assistance to the people of Cuba that have been affected by these disasters.

Tim, I do not know if you want to add to that?

Mr. CALLAGHAN. No. I think that sums it up.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. I'll yield back, but did want to say that I would hope that maybe some time we can have a hearing on Cuba. I was there a moment last time, it was about 2 or 3 years ago, and I do think that there are opportunities to really work, people to people. And I really admire the Cuban people. They are hard working, and keeping those '55 Chevys going is really interesting.

But sometime, Mr. Chairman, maybe we can have a discussion about Cuba in the future.

Mr. BURTON. If Cuba becomes free, I am sure those '55 Chevys will—they are antiques now. They can probably be sold for a lot of money.

Mr. PAYNE. I was going to try to bring one back.

Mr. BURTON. If you can distinctly define between a free hurricane and Communist hurricane, I would like to know?

Mr. PAYNE. I would like to figure out the difference between free Communists in China and unfree Communists in China, but that is another day too.

Mr. BURTON. You and I will have to have a cup of coffee and talk about this.

Mr. Weller.

Mr. WELLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Franco, it is good to have you here with us. Mr. Callaghan, welcome. And you know one of the countries that really is mentioned when we talk about hurricane assistance and relief is the island nation of Grenada, a country in which the economic damage from Hurricane Ivan in 2004 were 200 percent of the country's gross domestic product. Devastated country. I believe the vast majority of housing was destroyed in that hurricane. Even the Presidential residence or the Prime Minister's residence was severely damaged.

I was wondering, Mr. Franco, if you would assess the status of the reconstruction efforts in the island of Grenada and not only where they are today but where are we in helping them with the rebuilding.

Mr. FRANCO. I really believe that the numbers in Grenada are tremendous. We estimate that 90 percent of the homes in Grenada were either destroyed or damaged, which is an incredible statistic. When we first assembled the team there, we could not even land supplies on the Island. We were sending people to Barbados. There was not a recipient to get things there. Secretary Powell visited the island for a few hours after our efforts were under way and he told me he was extraordinarily pleased with everything that we had done. We really put every effort into stabilizing situation in Grenada. I met with Ambassador Kramer, our Ambassador to Barbados, about 10 days ago. She was recently in Grenada and she said the response of the Grenadian people and the appreciation—there was a question asked by Mr. Engel about the good will and benevolence of the American people—is outstanding. This is not just a PR campaign. It is important to understand that. But the actual results are such that we have people on the ground there. We have coordinating committees there now. We actually have a structure which we did not even have before about lessons learned in Grenada that can actually respond.

Mr. CALLAGHAN. We have also done a lot of training. I think based on USAID's quick response for—even last year we had a brief response—I think the Grenadian people and the host government have been very appreciative. We have worked with them a lot. Again, we are making sure there are committee teams in place. The effect of the hurricane though was quite extensive. I think the entire island being hit, everybody was impacted, and it did take good couple of days to a week before many people even went back to work. But there has been a lot of work with community preparedness groups and so forth, and I think they are in a better position today if another hurricane approached.

Mr. WELLER. To what extent has this reconstruction assistance that has been provided to Grenada prepared them to withstand another hurricane?

Mr. CALLAGHAN. Sure. I think again a lot of issues that—I think the key thing has been looking at building back better. I think hurricane straps and building homes back to withstand hurricanes, with a lot of experts taking a look at how to do that. I think that has been one of the key lessons learned and key things that has been hit home for any construction, whether it has been a school or hospital or the homes, is to take a look at how to build them back better so they can withstand hurricanes Categories 2 and 3.

Mr. WELLER. We have seen time and time again whenever disaster strikes around the world the United States is the first one there to provide the assistance, whether it is in Asia Pacific, Orient, Central America or the Caribbean. But I am interested in how your agency coordinates with our partners, whether it is your group or others from this hemisphere in providing help. Can you share with both ends, coordination and cooperation, immediately providing assistance but also when it comes to being prepared, putting together plans for the upcoming hurricane season?

Mr. CALLAGHAN. As I mentioned earlier—I can talk about that. In the eastern Caribbean, there is a group or committee that meets several times a year especially before hurricane season. They meet on several occasions to go over plans that have been in place, what commitments other countries and other groups will make if the hurricane impacts any one of the islands. In Grenada, when the hurricane hit, this group went to the island. It was the first airplane to arrive which was paid for by USAID with, again, all the seats in the plane, they are all—different groups of that committee have those seats on the plane and they were able to get in and conduct assessments, working together to then map out any sort of assistance that would come in. And again, I think it is successful in the eastern Caribbean doing it that way. They avoid a lot of duplication of efforts because the Canadians are on that, the Red Cross is on that committee, the UN is on this committee, the USAID is on that committee, and any sort of recommendations that we would make to Ambassador Kramer we were able to recommend to her on steps to be taken based on coordinating with all of the different groups.

Mr. WELLER. Short question deserving a short answer. The United States is number one in providing assistance in response to hurricanes and other natural disasters. What country is number two in our hemisphere in providing help.

Mr. FRANCO. I think, sir, it depends on the country. For example, there are multilateral institutions that are working, particularly the UN, Inter-American Development Bank, but I would say Canada would stand out. I am more familiar with the Haitian efforts, but I would say—in which they do of course have a major role. I would say CIDA, which is the same as USAID, which is the Canadian International Development Agency, is the one that would stand out.

Mr. CALLAGHAN. Yes. DFID, which is the equivalent from England, they again have people working in the region but they do not, in my opinion, come anywhere close to what the United States pro-

vides. The Europeans at times will also provide assistance close, but you know, my experience has been the United States not only first but usually more assistance than the other countries that we work with.

Mr. WELLER. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you, Mr. Weller. Ms. Lee.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And let me thank you for this hearing and thank our witnesses for being here. And I want to go back to Grenada for just a minute.

I had visited Grenada early part of the year. And Mr. Franco, I want to tell you, your staff and the Embassy and all of the USAID officials, they have done a phenomenal job, and given our rocky history with Grenada, it was very heartwarming to see all over the country USAID signs, for instance, and signs of "Thank you, United States." The kind of good will that that generated was remarkable, and the individuals that I met there—and I did meet with Ambassador Kramer but also with the USAID officials and other donor organizations. They were very committed to helping Grenada not only come back quickly and rebuild but also in trying to help through this rebuilding process, finding some sustainable kinds of development strategies that would help them not only be better prepared for the next hurricane but also just help the country in general in terms of its economic development efforts. And so I guess the building back better concept seems to be working in Grenada.

I would like for the Chairman of this Committee to go down in this Committee and look at best practices in Grenada because I think there are a lot of lessons that could be learned as a result of how Grenada moved forward so quickly. I know that we put some requirements on the money that was it \$45–46 million. It was what a year, 18-month requirement that they had to use all the money within a certain timeframe. It was 1 year. That to me seemed to be a bit unusual and most people thought that it was not a bad thing because it required a sense of urgency in building back. I am wondering, was that a kind of a standard requirement or was this specific because the devastation was so great and we wanted the money to get out quickly? What was the basis for that time requirement in which the money needed to be spent?

Mr. FRANCO. Well, I think we are both going to comment but I just have to take this opportunity to thank you on the record for the very hard work that Cynthia Rozell and others that you have met in Grenada are doing. They are fully committed professionals and I think they represent the best of the United States, and it has been a monumental effort. Let me just say quickly, Congresswoman, as you know Grenada very well, beyond the reconstruction effort, which has been phenomenal, as you know, is the economic activity. Nutmeg is a major product there and that product was devastated. So we are looking for economic opportunities and not only the reconstruction effort which is first and foremost, but the economic issues, and meaning by that activity and economic growth potential for Grenada to get back on its feet. So we are not just going to build the houses and leave. I want you to know that.



Ms. LEE. Good. Well, let me ask you though—for instance, the nutmeg industry. How are we helping entrepreneurs and families rebuild that?

Mr. FRANCO. Well, number one, we are looking at this situation—it is going to take some time to get the industry back up but that is a lucrative product so we are providing assistance to them to get those commodities and re-activate that industry as quickly as possible. That is the first thing.

Secondly, we are looking more broadly on the tourists and some other efforts in there than we did previously to create opportunity.

On your question, I'll let Tim comment as well. I have to plead a little guilty to this. I was involved when I was working up here on Capitol Hill on the Mitch effort, and it seemed to be at the time that we had this huge problem with Mitch, and it took a long time to get some things going. Now, I have a better appreciation for USAID than I did before I worked here, but we certainly wanted to—it is the latter in terms of your comments. We wanted to say, this is an emergency, this is a country where 90 percent of the dwellings were either damaged or destroyed, and we really wanted to put that benchmark of 1 year as our priority. We could always, from our sense, work back from that if we needed additional time, but we really wanted to frame the resource and the accountability in terms of the time frame as part of our reconstruction efforts. It was done with the motivation of the urgency, and I think it has paid off. But Tim, I do not know—

Mr. CALLAGHAN. I agree. I think having been on the island right after the hurricane and seeing the devastation not only with homes but also with electrical lines, and so forth, I think it also sent the positive message that USAID was committed, the United States Government was committed to helping the people of Grenada build back in a very quick way because the island was devastated.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chairman, I mentioned earlier that when I visited Grenada the earlier part of the year, I was amazed to find the “Thank you, America” signs. USAID has done such a phenomenal job with the 40-some million dollars, and the people were very complimentary and very supportive and very thankful for how we had helped in terms of the recovery efforts. Also I saw some of the best practices that could be adapted in other areas, for example—and this is one of the reasons, again, when we talked about the codel and why I would like for this Committee to have a chance to see Grenada and what has happened. For example, where schools were devastated, in many parts of the island, instead of rebuilding only a school, these structures were rebuilt not only as schools, but as community centers and hurricane shelters for the future. Even in terms of painting some of the structures that were rebuilt that had not been painted are now painted in vibrant colors. There's been a renewal of sort of a whole community/country renewal effort out of this disaster, and with minimal resources the people of Grenada, with the help of the United States, have done a phenomenal job. I think we need to see how they did it and what they did and what we need to do to help them move forward, especially in terms of their economic recovery, given the fact that 90 percent of the nutmeg industry is gone and they need a lot of assistance in moving forward.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you very much, Ms. Lee. Appreciate those kind comments.

I hate to follow up her kind comments with a couple of criticisms here, but maybe you can explain these things to me. The numbers for completed construction activities in Grenada, Jamaica and Haiti in some cases are far below what they initially targeted. For example, in Jamaica your target for building new houses, according to the information we have, was 200. Then it was revised to 186 and by the deadline only—none were completed. In Haiti, USAID's initial target for repairing targets was 3,000 and then it was reduced to 600 and then 456 were completed by the deadline, which was about one-sixth of what you anticipated. I find it troubling sometimes how USAID sets targets and then revises those targets later in the year. I think in 2005, from January-December they revised them and then just before the deadline, December 31, 2005, these targets were cut even further. It sometimes looks like last-minute damage control and so I'd just like to ask why were those revised targets issued in December 2005 within a month of the deadline? What occurred between January and December 2005 that caused the initial targets to be so radically changed?

Mr. FRANCO. Well, first of all, I am going to add to this, Tim, if you'd like a turn on this. The targets we set are our best judgment as to what we can accomplish within the time frame. They are done in good faith. And if we do not meet the targets, this Committee and you, Mr. Chairman, deserve an explanation as of course do the people and the government of the region. With respect to Haiti, there were complications regarding the security situation. It is just that simple. I was personally involved in that. So we continued in those targets as long as we could. When we say target, that is our goal. That is what we are working to achieve, and we do our best to make it happen. We do often wait and revise the target more at an earlier date. We try though to satisfy that target. We had security issues.

Mr. BURTON. Let me interrupt you real quickly here on Haiti with the new President being elected and how they are hoping to have a different approach to solving problems and need that assistance. My colleagues and I have talked about this a number of times. Is there any indication you're going to go back and try to hit that goal of 3,000 houses to be repaired?

Mr. FRANCO. Absolutely. This is a timing issue for us. This is not the only program that we have that has been delayed in Haiti. It has been delayed because of the security situation but we intend to satisfy our targets. The problem has been that we will not be able to satisfy the target with the initial date that we provided.

Mr. BURTON. Okay. Let me ask you about these 200 houses that were supposed to be rebuilt in Jamaica by the deadline, none were completed.

Mr. FRANCO. Well, the Jamaica situation is a different situation. We are host—maybe you can add to this, Tim. Maybe you can do it. You are more familiar—but the Jamaica situation has to do with the entity in Jamaica with whom we work. In other words, we are guests in these countries. We do not have carte blanche. We work with counterparts, governmental counterparts, and we encountered significant difficulties with Jamaican counterparts. Not finger

pointing, Mr. Chairman, or laying the blame, they just did not have the ability to react to the requirements that we have to account for the funds and to carry out the programs as mandated by law in our own regulations, and as a consequence of that situation, we did not have a Jamaican counterpart that was ready to carry out the program. That was the cause of that delay.

[Additional information follows:]

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM THE HONORABLE ADOLFO A. FRANCO TO  
QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE DAN BURTON

USAID HOME REPAIRS AND REBUILDS

To date, USAID has repaired 1,040 homes in Jamaica and constructed 186 new homes. In Grenada, under the Grenada Community Revitalization activity, USAID has repaired 1,123 damaged homes and constructed 55 new homes. In Haiti, USAID has constructed 666 homes.

Mr. CALLAGHAN. There was also some commitments made and as time went on the group who had made those commitments in Jamaica were not able to carry them out.

Mr. BURTON. Okay. Well, we have some other questions we would like to submit to you for the record. Do my colleagues have any other questions real quickly before we adjourn?

Mr. PAYNE. I too would hope that we could reconcentrate on Haiti because, as the Chairman said, President Preval seemed like he wants to try to move the government forward, trying to cooperate. The Administration did not like Aristide so he left. It seems like we would perhaps really concentrate and do all we can to assist the new President so that he could perhaps show some successes and start to turn that country around, which is going to be almost next to impossible, but if we could show some more esprit de corps with the new administration, I think it would be very good.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you. Ms. Lee?

Ms. LEE. Yes, Mr. Chairman. Real quick. Hurricane Katrina of course we know was devastating to the residents of the gulf region. Again, when I was in Grenada, I thought about some of the best practices and some of the preparedness that not only Grenada but other Caribbean islands have in place because of course they are affected by these hurricanes over and over and over again. There was a regional conference of Caribbean nations, I guess it was probably February, March in the Caribbean, to discuss hurricane preparedness and emergency response efforts, and I thought—and I believe I mentioned this to the Ambassador—that it might make sense, and I do not know if we do this or not, but to invite emergency preparedness personnel from the United States, especially from those States, to participate in these regional conferences in the Caribbean so that the ideas and the best responses that we have, that they need to learn about, would be presented in that international forum and also that we could learn from how Caribbean countries respond to these natural disasters. I am just wondering, in our international efforts with regard to the Caribbean do we invite mayors or emergency preparedness personnel from the United States to the Caribbean for these conferences on hurricanes?

Mr. CALLAGHAN. Sure. Normally we do not. Obviously after Hurricane Mitch, FEMA had a lot of resources—or had some resources where they did work more in Central America and USAID and FEMA did a lot of work with working together, for example, with CONRED, who is the Guatemalan equivalent and in Nicaragua and El Salvador as well and Honduras. We have not done that as much the last couple of years, but I know that, again, in the Central American region a lot of the emergency groups have had—or did have a lot of contact with United States Government officials.

Ms. LEE. Well, I am telling you, FEMA certainly could learn a lot if they participated with the Caribbean.

Mr. BURTON. Well, let me just interject and say it is probably a two-way street. If you had people that have the expertise on how to rehabilitate or rebuild an area, going down there and working with the local officials and the people that would be participating in the reconstruction process, they might be able to handle a lot of these problems down the road themselves rather than relying just on the United States. I do not know if we do that or not, but—

Mr. FRANCO. That is certainly our goal—you can add, Tim, to this—our goal, Mr. Chairman. There is a meeting—like Congressman Lee brought up an excellent suggestion in September, Chief of Missions meeting, that will be hosted in Barbados with all the Ambassadors. I am sure that is certainly on the agenda. I can tell you though in the last 2 or 3 years—I was in Miami with Tim in the private sector, which we did not get a chance to talk too much about, as well. There is increased interest in addressing this issue in a more coordinated fashion and sharing these experiences.

So I will follow up personally on that because I think it is an excellent suggestion to see what coordination that is not taking place needs to take place because I can tell you everyone—I would say private business has a good motivation, it wants—it does not want to see its investments affected either so everyone has an interest in this, and they need to get together to discuss these issues.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. I look forward to seeing—

Mr. FRANCO. Good. I definitely will do that. I just wanted to comment very quickly on Haiti if I could, Mr. Chairman, because Mr. Payne brought it up. Let me just say that I was with Secretary Shannon in Brazil 2 or 3 weeks ago at a major donors conference that was hosted by the Government of Brazil on Haiti at that time. We spoke on behalf of the Administration. The United States Government's position is to be as supportive as possible to the Preval Administration. We have made significant investments in Haiti. There was a supplemental, as you know, to even additional resources that are being provided by the Congress for Haiti. So we are very engaged. We are very encouraged. We want to be as supportive as possible.

On July 26 there will be a meeting in Port-au-Prince. We hope that Ambassador Tobias, the USAID Administrator and Director of Foreign Assistance will lead our governmental delegation. It will be his first visit to the region to Port-au-Prince to reaffirm that support for Haiti. So I want to assure you that at every channel, starting with President Bush, we want this Administration, the Preval Administration, to succeed.

Mr. CALLAGHAN. Can I add one thing? Also in July USAID, we have a series of disaster management training activities and working with the United Nations. There will be training for local officials in Haiti. I met with Madame Baptiste a couple of weeks ago and they are looking forward to that. The first one will be training instructors, local Haitians, to do training to their own staff, and then later on we will be doing damage assessment and other activities as the materials are translated into French.

Thank you.

Mr. BURTON. Well, very good. We appreciate very much your testimony today, and we will have some questions for you for the record if you do not mind, and with that we stand adjourned.

Mr. CALLAGHAN. Thank you.

Mr. FRANCO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Whereupon, at 3:35 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

