Chronic conflicts, droughts, earthquakes, floods, seasonal storms, and severe winter weather, compounded by limited government response capacity in some countries, present significant challenges to vulnerable populations in South Asia. Between FY 2006 and FY 2015, USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) and USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FPF) provided humanitarian assistance in response to a diverse range of natural and man-made disasters in the region. Examples include cyclones in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan; earthquakes in India, Nepal, and Pakistan; floods and landslides throughout the region; and complex emergencies in Afghanistan, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Between FY 2006 and FY 2015, USAID provided more than $2.6 billion to assist disaster-affected populations in South Asia. USAID/FPF support included nearly $1.8 billion for emergency food assistance in the form of U.S.-purchased food, locally and regionally purchased food, cash transfers for food, food vouchers, and related activities. USAID/OFDA assistance included more than $828 million for programs in agriculture and food security; economic recovery and market systems (ERMS); health; humanitarian coordination and information management; logistics support and relief commodities; nutrition; protection; shelter and settlements; search and rescue; and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).

In the last decade, USAID frequently deployed humanitarian teams to the South Asia region, including six Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs). The majority of DARTs in South Asia responded to emergencies...
in Pakistan, including earthquakes in FY 2006 and FY 2009, conflict and displacement in FY 2009, and flooding in FY 2010. In addition, USAID deployed a DART to Bangladesh in response to Cyclone Sidr in FY 2008 and to Nepal following a magnitude 7.8 earthquake in FY 2015.

Due to the recurrent or chronic nature of many of the disasters that affect populations across South Asia, USAID/OFDA and USAID/FFP provide additional funding beyond that programmed toward specific responses. The additional funds have supported projects that increase the resilience of vulnerable populations to cope with future shocks. In collaboration with U.S. Government, host country, and regional counterparts, USAID/OFDA and USAID/FFP’s initiatives seek to build the capacity of affected households and communities, in conjunction with development programs, where feasible and appropriate. USAID/OFDA also supports early recovery activities that help crisis-affected populations rebuild livelihoods and strengthen self-sufficiency, where possible. USAID/OFDA has developed a South Asia regional disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategy to complement emergency assistance interventions and address the underlying causes of vulnerability, emphasizing building local capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters. Examples of DRR programs in South Asia include earthquake risk management in Nepal, drought mitigation in southern Pakistan, and hazard mapping in Afghanistan, as well as training disaster management authorities and first responders throughout the region.

Through emergency and development food assistance programs, USAID/FFP works to save lives and reduce hunger and malnutrition in times of crisis and situations of chronic food insecurity. USAID/FFP emergency food assistance interventions include cash transfers for food, food vouchers, general food distributions, targeted supplementary feeding, and food-for-work, food-for-training, and food-for-assets programs, among other activities.

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1 FY 2015 figures represent committed or obligated amounts as of September 30, 2015. FY 2015 figures are subject to fluctuation due to end-of-fiscal-year financial review and reconciliation activities. Figures do not include USAID/OFDA disaster preparedness and mitigation assistance provided outside of declared disaster responses or USAID/FFP development assistance.

2 Chart does not include disaster preparedness and mitigation assistance, administrative support costs, or funding not categorized by sector due to changes to the USAID/OFDA accounting system that occurred during the decade.