

Guatemalan Drought Victims to Receive Urgent Relief

OAS, PADF Respond to Government's Plea for Food

Washington, D.C. Oct. 5, 2009 – Four cargo containers with desperately needed food will be sent to Guatemala's drought-stricken regions to help stave off malnutrition and starvation due to the worst drought in this country in 30 years, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) announced.

“This grave situation becomes even more compelling because young children are the first victims of malnutrition,” says Assistant Secretary General of the OAS Ambassador Albert Ramdin. “We knew we needed to act right away. The OAS contribution of \$20,000 will enable PADF to mobilize more than \$250,000 in relief for the drought victims.”

Three 40-foot containers of fortified rice and soy protein meal packages and one container of corn will be shipped from the United States. Each of the three containers holds 270,864 servings of dehydrated fortified rice meals.

“The OAS contribution allows PADF to tap into relationships that it has built up through more than 47 years of natural disaster work in Latin America and the Caribbean,” says PADF Executive Director John Sanbrailo. “This is part of PADF's mandate to meet critical humanitarian and development needs in collaboration with the OAS.”

The food is being provided through a PADF partnership with Feed My Starving Children and International Services of Hope/IMPACT. Another PADF partner, the U.S. Military Southern Command in Miami, will provide additional support along with other PADF donors.

The Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the OAS, Ambassador Jorge Skinner-Klee, expressed his deep appreciation for this rapid and generous contribution to drought relief efforts and called on other donors to collaborate with PADF in this initiative. Ambassador Skinner-Klee has worked to raise awareness and resources for drought relief in his country.

PADF is continuing its efforts to mobilize additional contributions from other donors, particularly corporate donors who have generously supported its Disaster Management Emergency Response Program (DMERP).

About PADF

PADF is an independent, non-profit organization that creates public-private partnerships to assist the least advantaged people in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Through these partnerships and as a unique affiliate of the Organization of American States, PADF creates economic opportunities, strengthens communities and prepares for and responds to natural disasters.

Having worked in every country in the region, PADF engages community-based groups, governments and the private sector in the process of implementing appropriate solutions for sustainable development.

In the past year, more than 5 million people in 18 countries benefited from PADF and its programs. www.padf.org

For more information, please contact:

Michael J. Zamba
Senior Director
Communications & Public Affairs
Pan American Development Foundation
Tel. (202) 458-6180