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Helping Communities Displaced by Severe Flooding in Burundi

Burundi's annual February-to-April rainy season often generates flooding that can damage or destroy houses, crops, and livelihoods in flood-prone areas. In April 2018, heavy rainfall resulted in severe flooding across parts of southern and western Burundi, including in Bujumbura Marie, Bujumbura Rural, and Makamba provinces. The floods affected an estimated 23,000 people, damaged or destroyed more than 2,000 houses, and disrupted livelihoods for many vulnerable households.

In response to damage caused by heavy rainfall and flooding, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) provided \$50,000 to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to address unmet humanitarian needs of flood-affected households in Burundi. With USAID/OFDA support, IOM provided more than 1,000 households with emergency shelter assistance and rental support, as well as relief items—including blankets, floor mats, kitchen sets, mosquito nets, soap, and water containers.

Tereza—pictured above—and Seraphina, residents of Makamba, were among the individuals adversely affected by the April

flooding. “When the floods occurred, my house was destroyed. I was desperate,” Seraphina recalled. Following the flooding, Seraphina and many other flood-affected people did not have enough money for basic goods, as the floods destroyed most of their belongings and damaged agricultural fields and key infrastructure.

IOM's three-month rental support and distributions of essential household items came at a critical time for Seraphina and other flood-affected people. “We welcomed this help. Having people who help you in such circumstances... I can only be grateful,” Seraphina added.

While the floods had a lasting impact on affected communities, USAID/OFDA and IOM provided urgent humanitarian assistance to meet the immediate needs of Seraphina and Tereza's families and other displaced households in Burundi.

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