

Written Statement of
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FEMA

**“Catastrophic Preparedness:
How Ready Is FEMA
for the Next Big Disaster?”**

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Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee
U.S. Senate
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I. Introduction

Good morning Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins, and distinguished Members of the Committee. My name is Craig Fugate, and I am the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It is an honor to appear before you today on behalf of FEMA to discuss our preparedness for catastrophic disasters. Planning and preparing for catastrophic disasters is a top priority at FEMA, and we appreciate the Committee's attention to this important matter.

In September 2010, the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General (OIG) issued a report on FEMA's preparedness for the next catastrophic disaster. The report assessed FEMA's preparedness on several key issues: overall planning, coordination and support, emergency communications, logistics, evacuations, housing, disaster workforce, mission assignments, acquisition management and mitigation.

The OIG report recognized the significant progress that FEMA has made over the past two years. The report also discussed areas where FEMA can continue to improve upon its ability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards. While we are proud of the gains we have made over the past several years, we will continue to approach our work with vigilance, always striving to do better.

In my testimony today, I will discuss how FEMA is working to improve our preparedness through the "Whole Community" framework. This approach recognizes that FEMA is not the nation's emergency management team – FEMA is only a part of the team. In order to successfully prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards, we must work with the entire emergency management community. This "Whole Community" includes FEMA and our partners at the federal level; our state, local, tribal and territorial governmental partners; non-governmental organizations like faith-based and non-profit groups and private sector industry; and most importantly, individuals, families, and communities, who continue to be our greatest assets and the key to our success.

In order to fulfill our mission, we must recognize that these parties are all important participants in the emergency management community, and make sure that all these participants work together as one team. In my testimony today, I will address all of the different participants in the "Whole Community" and discuss how we work together in order to ensure the greatest level of preparedness for a catastrophic disaster.

II. The Role of the Federal Government in Catastrophic Disasters

While our efforts must involve the entire emergency management community, FEMA clearly has an important role to play in preparing for, protecting against, responding to, recovering from, and mitigating all hazards. The recent OIG report addresses FEMA's need to integrate the Agency's emergency preparedness, protection, response, recovery and mitigation responsibilities so that we can better fulfill our mission.

These efforts were underway even before the OIG issued its report. On October 1, 2009, the Response, Recovery, Federal Coordinating Officer Program, and Logistics Management Directorates were combined under a new Office of Response and Recovery to more closely align the organizational structure with FEMA's operational mission. This reorganization has enhanced FEMA's ability to perform its mission of coordinating and providing an immediate federal disaster response and recovery capability with state, local and tribal partners in anticipation of, or immediately following, a major disaster.

Under the new Office of Response and Recovery, we have also established a new Planning Division that is focused on national, regional and chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive catastrophic planning efforts. The Planning Division is responsible for developing and coordinating joint state/federal catastrophic incident plans, leading the development and alignment of national-level interagency efforts, and coordinating with FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate on regional grant planning initiatives to align all catastrophic planning efforts. The Office of Response and Recovery is also producing needed operational doctrine and response readiness standards.

FEMA's Disaster Workforce

I agree with the OIG that in order to fulfill our role within the emergency management community, we need a trained and effective disaster workforce. In order to maximize the use of our personnel, we must not only ensure that positions are filled, but also that employees receive training that enables them to perform the task at hand.

In February 2010, as part of a broader headquarters realignment, the Disaster Reserve Workforce and Human Capital Divisions of FEMA were integrated into the new Office of the Chief Component Human Capital Officer (OCCHCO). As a result, the Disaster Workforce Division now oversees the readiness and deployment functions for the entire disaster workforce of full-time and reserve employees. Additionally, a critical mass of staffing in the budget, policy and system areas are able to provide more effective services to both the institutional and deployable workforces.

FEMA also recognizes the need to ensure that every person who is called upon to assist in an emergency is up to the task. To that end, in early 2010, FEMA established a National Credentialing Program in order to coordinate activities, incorporate policies, and recommend guidance and standards for credentialing all FEMA personnel and state, tribal and local officials who require access to disaster areas or FEMA facilities during an emergency. The Deputy Administrator for Protection and National Preparedness is responsible for the National Credentialing Program. This program will also ensure unity of effort in line with the National Response Framework (NRF).

Pursuant to the standards and guidelines set forth in the National Credentialing Program, FEMA's Office of Response and Recovery began working in 2010 to broaden the oversight of its Agency-wide credentialing program for FEMA employees. This credentialing program—known as the FEMA Qualification System (FQS)—represents an important step forward in

credentialing FEMA employees. FEMA's credentialing program was reconfigured to provide unity of effort with all levels of the emergency management community.

FEMA's success depends both on a trained disaster workforce as well as a fully-staffed group of permanent full-time employees. We have implemented an aggressive hiring strategy. As of February 24, 2011, the agency has filled 94 percent of its 5,405 positions. This number is reflective of the FEMA-imposed administrative 'salary cap' put in place for all program offices, which has limited the funding on hiring of positions. While fill rates may ebb and flow as employees join our team, move on to other opportunities, or retire, it is the Agency's goal to maintain at least a 90 percent staffing level throughout FY 2011. Also, at the end of 2010, FEMA brought on board its full time Chief Component Human Capital Officer.

FEMA's Acquisition Management

As part of its audit of FEMA's acquisition management capability, the OIG noted progress with respect to having pre-disaster contracts in place; recruiting, training and retaining sufficient acquisition staff; and post-award oversight.

FEMA is committed to ensuring effective acquisition management, which both strengthens our response capability and ensures that we are good stewards of taxpayer dollars. To that end, the Office of the Chief Procurement Officer (OCPO) at FEMA continues to make progress on acquisition management, balancing the use of prepositioned contracts with the requirements of Section 307 of the Stafford Act which pertains to requiring FEMA to contract with local vendors to the maximum extent possible when responding to a declared major disaster.

The Acquisition Operations Division of OCPO, under which the majority of contracting officers and contract specialists are employed, has an 85 percent fill rate, and we continue to work to fill necessary positions. We have also increased our contract oversight and administration of disaster contracts, avoiding and eliminating waste, fraud and abuse in the contracting process. OCPO has gained approval for 26 Direct Charge Cadre of On-call Response Employees (CORE) that will constitute a Disaster Acquisition Response Team (DART) whose primary focus will be to respond to disasters and provide contract administration and oversight of the large disaster contracts in the field. We will continue to work to improve our acquisition management capability.

FEMA will continue to improve its capabilities by recruiting, training and retaining sufficient staff in all areas necessary to ensure preparedness for a catastrophic disaster and working closely with the entire emergency management community. One of the most important ways we do that is through our partnerships at the federal level.

Federal Catastrophic Planning

FEMA coordinates closely with our federal partners in catastrophic planning, mission assignments, interagency agreements and advanced contracts for commodities, among other ways. These partnerships are essential to FEMA's ability to carry out its mission by leveraging the full capacity of the federal government to prepare for, respond to, recover from and mitigate a catastrophic incident.

FEMA has expanded its coordination with other federal agencies to smooth and adapt coordination of federal support when it is needed. A key component of the NRF is the Catastrophic Incident Annex (NRF-CIA), which establishes the context and overarching strategy for implementing and coordinating an accelerated, proactive national response to a catastrophic incident. Recognizing that federal resources may be required to augment state, tribal, and local response efforts, the NRF-CIA establishes protocols to pre-identify and rapidly deploy key essential resources (e.g., medical teams, search and rescue teams, transportable shelters, medical and equipment caches, etc.).

Under the NRF, federal agencies are grouped by capability and type of expertise into 15 Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) to provide the planning, support, resources, program implementation, and emergency services needed during a disaster. The ESFs serve as the primary operational-level mechanisms supporting state, local and tribal efforts--coordinated by FEMA--in providing disaster assistance in functional areas such as transportation, communications, public works and engineering, firefighting, mass care, housing, human services, public health and medical services, search and rescue, agriculture, and energy. The signatories to the NRF provide substantial disaster response assistance in their areas of expertise, as well as operational support when assigned missions to support the disaster response.

FEMA also coordinates ESF emergency management and interagency planning, and collaborates with the ESFs through the Emergency Support Function Leadership Group (ESFLG). FEMA has reenergized coordination within the interagency through the ESFLG, as well as the Regional Interagency Steering Committees (RISC), and is in the final stages of revising the ESFLG charter to more clearly identify and share leadership responsibilities in coordinating interagency activities related to the ongoing management of the NRF and associated activities. FEMA is also working to provide national interagency planning oversight, and can elevate issues not resolved at the ESFLG level to the National Security Staff's Domestic Resiliency Group for review and resolution. The ESFLG members have begun to work more closely by conducting monthly meetings and work groups as required. Routine coordination with the RISC in each FEMA region has also increased and is providing better regional and state perspectives and helping us to identify grassroots issues for resolution.

One example of FEMA-led interagency coordination that produced enormously successful results is FEMA's work on the Deepwater Integrated Services Team (DIST) during and after the Gulf oil spill. The DIST included a variety of subgroups drawing on the expertise of members from a number of federal agencies. The DIST Language Access Subgroup, for example, included members from FEMA, the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, the Department of Health and Human Services, the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, the Department of Justice, and others. This subgroup was instrumental in leveraging the information and resources available to the participating coalition of federal agencies to ensure that limited English proficient populations in the Gulf, including the large community of Vietnamese-speaking individuals in the Gulf fishing industry, had access to critical information and assistance. FEMA will replicate this successful model to ensure equal access to all populations in the event of a future catastrophic incident.

As another example of our federal response efforts, national catastrophic planning also includes developing a Federal Interagency Operations Plan for Earthquakes. This plan is oriented toward response and short-term recovery, and will address federal capabilities supporting response efforts to a catastrophic earthquake occurring anywhere in the United States and its territories. FEMA's regions are also partnering directly with their states on joint planning efforts with a focus on specific fault zones or other hazards present within those regions. The overarching Federal Interagency Operations Plan ties all of these efforts together in a capstone document to address the means by which the federal interagency will prepare for and respond to a catastrophic earthquake. This plan will be evaluated in National Level Exercise (NLE) 2011.

National efforts to ensure resilience in the U.S. are focusing on improving existing catastrophic event preparedness capabilities, but with a renewed conviction to plan for the most extreme disasters. We are building on the strengths of local communities and citizens and integrating the public as a critical resource and definite part of the solution. The faith based communities, fraternal and trade associations, and the broader marketplace are all viewed as important to collaboration and are included in the planning efforts. While the impact of catastrophes will certainly be felt at the federal and state levels, they have the potential to be most devastating at the community level. Therefore, our catastrophic response strategy is being designed to quickly stabilize communities, and calibrated to support their timely recovery and return to municipal self-sufficiency. We recognize that only through close cooperation with all partners can we begin to close gaps and agree on the most critical objectives.

Regional Catastrophic Planning

Regional catastrophic planning, and the development of operational plans, is underway for several different geographic areas on catastrophic planning efforts. These include plans addressing catastrophic earthquakes, hurricanes (separate efforts are looking at such events in New England, Louisiana, and Florida), dam failures, improvised nuclear device detonation, evacuation and sheltering of populations during catastrophic events, and preparing for other special events such as the State of the Union Address and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit. FEMA is also working with state partners in at least seven regions to develop "all-hazard" plans based on hazard surveys and risk assessments occurring in each region and state. All of these plans are being developed by our regions – with support from FEMA headquarters – in partnership with federal, state, and local agencies through the six phases of the planning process, as outlined in our recently published Regional Planning Guide.

The plans will address the unique considerations that exist in the event of a catastrophic incident and identify the tasks and activities that federal, state and other partners will carry out to meet response objectives. They will also specifically identify how resources, personnel, and assets will be allocated in order to execute the mission objectives and priorities, and include a concept of operations with supporting annexes. Scenario and damage information to inform the planning efforts is provided by the U.S. Geological Survey and the academic community. A staff estimate is conducted by the state-federal planning team to refine requirements and develop courses of action to address identified needs. To drive decisions as the plans are developed, a senior steering committee is established with membership from the governors' offices, our regional administrators, adjutants general, the defense coordinating officers, and other state and federal officials.

Mission Assignments

FEMA uses mission assignments to request disaster response support from other federal agencies. Mission assignments are work orders issued by FEMA to other federal agencies that direct the completion of a specific task and are intended to meet urgent, immediate and short term needs. They allow FEMA to quickly request federal partners to provide critical resources, services or expertise. To date, FEMA has developed 250 pre-scripted mission assignments with 29 federal agencies.

The recent OIG report underscored the importance of clear mission assignments and highlighted that FEMA has developed a standard operating procedures manual for mission assignments that outlines policies, procedures, and processes used to collaborate with other federal agencies and organizations when responding to disasters. The report noted the need for FEMA to have reliable IT systems for its mission assignment processes that are integrated with the systems of our federal partners, so that information is efficiently and effectively shared. We agree with the OIG's assessment and are working actively to implement their recommendations.

We have completed interagency coordination and pre-scripted mission assignments to ensure the delivery of an array of federal capabilities and resources. This support ranges from heavy-lift helicopters from the Department of Defense, to generators from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to disaster medical assistance teams from the Department of Health and Human Services, and emergency road clearing teams from the U.S. Forest Service. These pre-scripted mission assignments drive a more rapid and responsive delivery of federal support to states, communities and tribes.

Logistics

Our logistics capability is also dependent upon strong and sustained federal partnerships. FEMA serves as co-lead with the General Services Administration (GSA) for the NRF's Emergency Support Function 7, Logistics Management and Resources Support. FEMA also serves as the national logistics coordinator, helping to foster a unique interagency supply chain partnership between FEMA, GSA, the Department of Defense and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. We leverage the expertise and capability of our federal partners to improve and sustain our supply chain operations. This level of interagency coordination allows us to be good stewards of federal dollars by limiting readiness costs and ensuring that we pay for services only at the time of request. FEMA also uses contracts, which can be activated to provide services such as ambulance and bus evacuation, both pre- and post-event, as well as facilities support, electrical generator maintenance and temporary housing support.

An effective logistics operation depends on a trained and talented workforce. Since 2007, FEMA has almost tripled the number of permanent full-time logistics staff and has reprogrammed 15 headquarters positions to the field in order to enhance the regional logistics response capability, improving the quality of our overall response.

The recent OIG audit and report discussed FEMA's logistics capability and highlighted both progress and shortfalls in FEMA's Total Asset Visibility Program. FEMA is implementing the

Logistics Supply Chain Management System (LSCMS), formerly known as the Total Asset Visibility Program, to provide asset and in-transit visibility as well as electronic order management for all primary commodities. LSCMS embraces more than just total asset visibility; it encompasses the entire supply chain management process. Currently, all ten FEMA regions have LSCMS program capability to electronically track orders, shipments in transit and shipments received in near real time. The aspect of the program that manages warehouse inventory is currently available in three of FEMA's nine distribution centers. Five of the remaining six distribution centers should have this same capability by June 2011, with the last remaining center to be completed by 2012.

Also, we will systematically upgrade our National Distribution Centers, which are at the core of FEMA's supply chain transformation effort and are essential to FEMA's fundamental life-sustaining and saving assets. The improved warehousing strategy will provide the capacity and flexibility to respond effectively and efficiently to the full set of disaster scenarios. The official opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony for our new distribution center in Atlanta was held on November 17, 2010.

III. The Role of State, Local and Tribal Governmental Partners

Communication and coordination with state, local and tribal governments is another essential part of our effort to integrate the entire emergency management community. We agree with the OIG report on the need to effectively coordinate with state, local and tribal governments. FEMA's leadership comes from diverse backgrounds, but we share something vital: direct, on-the-ground experience in state and local emergency management. Our experiences have helped us realize and appreciate the important role that state, local and tribal governments play in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. FEMA's success is heavily dependent upon our ability to communicate, coordinate and work closely with these groups.

As an example, the OIG report discussed the importance of providing state and local law enforcement access to FEMA's disaster recovery assistance files. We wholeheartedly agree. In order to accomplish this, we now have a process in place that routinely allows FEMA to disclose information to law enforcement when certain criteria are met. We also coordinate closely with state and local emergency management officials to ensure clear lines of information sharing.

Emergency Communication

We agree with the OIG report that emergency communications issues presented an impediment to operations in the immediate aftermath of both the September 11, 2001 attacks and Hurricane Katrina. The ability to effectively communicate during and immediately after a disaster is essential to fulfilling our mission. When working on a tight timeframe with partners at the federal, regional, state, local and tribal levels, making sure that everyone is on the same page is absolutely essential. As a result, we have worked hard and put systems in place to ensure that we can coordinate and communicate in ways accessible to diverse communities that allow us to accomplish our objectives during disasters.

Moreover, the OIG report addressed several aspects of FEMA's emergency communications ability, including coordination with state, local and tribal responders. We were pleased that the OIG report noted substantial progress in FEMA's coordination of emergency communications support for state, local and tribal responders during Stafford Act incidents, as well as management of the deployment and operation of communications assets. The Disaster Emergency Communications (DEC) Division has significantly enhanced state and local governments' communications capabilities through supporting the development of communications plans. To date, DEC has provided support in the establishment of 36 state-specific plans to improve the nation's interoperability capabilities. We will deliver six additional state plans in FY2011.

Logistics Capability Assessment Tool

The OIG report recommended that FEMA work with state partners to identify and overcome state and local logistical deficiencies, which we are doing with the implementation of the Logistics Capability Assessment Tool (LCAT). The LCAT allows states to automatically self-assess their logistics maturity in five key areas: logistics planning, operations, organization, property management and distribution management. We have also created a guidance document that assists the states with the emergency supplies grant approval process as they determine their needs through LCAT self-assessment.

Grant Programs

Over the past five years, FEMA and DHS have provided more than \$23.8 billion for state and local projects through our homeland security and preparedness grant programs and an additional \$2.5 billion in firefighter grants. This financial support to our state and local partners has been coupled with intensive stakeholder outreach.

FEMA also supports its state and local partners through its Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program (RCPGP) initiative. The RCPGP has provided over \$30 million annually to enhance catastrophic incident preparedness in 10 high-risk, high-consequence urban areas and their surrounding regions. RCPGP is intended to support coordination of regional all-hazard planning for catastrophic events, including the development of integrated plans, protocols and procedures to manage a catastrophic event. The deliverables from the RCPGP will be made available throughout the country to enhance national resilience.

Beginning in FY 2009, critical emergency provisions, such as shelf-stable food products, water and basic medical supplies, became allowable expenses under the Homeland Security Grant Program, State Homeland Security Program (SHSP), allowing states to apply for SHSP funding to address these needs. The states of Louisiana and Indiana were approved for funding for critical emergency supplies in FY2010 under the SHSP.

Tribal Outreach

To continue our collaborative relationships with tribal governments, FEMA has tribal liaisons in all FEMA regions with federally recognized tribes. Our emphasis is on treating the tribes on a

nation-to-nation level. Federally recognized tribes have a unique and direct relationship with the federal government, and therefore require specific outreach to ensure a successful collaboration.

At the direction of President Obama, FEMA established a Tribal Policy on June 29, 2010, to articulate the Agency's commitment to respect and honor tribes as equal partners. We are currently in the final stages of developing the implementation plan for this Tribal Policy. FEMA remains committed to recognizing the sovereign rights, authority, and unique status of tribal governments and is committed to working in close partnership with Indian tribes.

Evacuations

As the OIG correctly pointed out, emergency evacuations are the primary responsibility of state and local governments. However, if state and local emergency management systems become overwhelmed in the event of a disaster, FEMA may implement and support a federalized evacuation to augment the state, tribal and local government plans and operations. The OIG report assessed FEMA's evacuation plans and operations, noting progress in many areas, while recognizing—as we do—that there is more work to do.

As the OIG report accurately noted, evacuations during the 2008 hurricane season demonstrate that FEMA's efforts are having an impact. Over 2 million people were successfully evacuated, including during Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. Moreover, FEMA is finalizing a national system for states to track evacuees. One example of the tools being developed is the Evacuee Support Planning Guide – FEMA P-760 – a planning resource for states that may receive a substantial number of evacuees from another state and for states that may experience a large evacuation from one area of the state to another. FEMA has also developed reimbursement policies for states to host evacuees and tools such as the National Mass Evacuation Tracking Systems (NMETS).

As part of the planning process, and at the request of the states, FEMA has been:

- Assisting states in identifying potential host states for evacuees.
- Providing technical assistance for the implementation of the NMETS. This system is both manual and computer-based, and is designed to assist states in tracking the movement of transportation-assisted evacuees, their household pets, luggage and medical equipment during evacuations.
- Coordinating with state government-assisted transportation providers to maintain accurate manifests.
- Supporting evacuees throughout the evacuation process, both in reception areas as well as host states.
- Coordinating with household pet service providers to ensure that adequate sheltering and services are available during the evacuation.
- Coordinating with partner agencies to plan for and provide mass care support to evacuees as they return home and enter permanent housing.

IV. The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations

Government can and will continue to serve disaster survivors. However, we fully recognize that a government-centric approach to disaster management will not be enough to meet the challenges posed by a catastrophic incident. That is why we must fully engage our entire societal capacity, leveraging trade associations, non-governmental organizations – including those that represent different linguistic and ethnic minority groups, faith-based organizations, private industry, and social and fraternal organizations. These are the organizations that provide the bulk of services to communities every day, and to the extent that they are able, they should continue to be the primary provider of such services in a disaster. The quicker these entities are able to get back on their feet, the faster communities as a whole will be able to recover.

Private Sector Collaboration

The private sector is a key partner in our catastrophic planning efforts. Various companies and organizations have worked with FEMA at the state and regional levels to collaborate and help develop catastrophic plans. Key corporate and academic experts have provided essential resources and input, and we have established relationships to facilitate response and recovery in coordination with these entities.

At the national level, we are working with the private sector on a host of issues that will benefit our catastrophic planning. We have corporate candidates, nominated by the Retail Industry Leaders Association, serving three-month rotations within our National Response Coordination Center (NRCC). We have included private sector, volunteer and faith-based representatives in our no-notice “thunderbolt” response and recovery exercises, and we have shared ideas and lessons learned on a wide array of technology initiatives, including mobile applications, shared data feeds, and alert warnings through smart phones and other devices. Finally, one of our primary working groups is chaired by a member of the private sector, in order to support National Level Exercise 2011 (NLE 11) by engaging the private sector. This working group has already begun planning at the state, regional and national levels alongside DHS and FEMA planners. As we move forward with all aspects of planning for a catastrophic earthquake event, the private sector is collaborating with us every step of the way, and our progress is better for it.

Non-Profit Community

Working with the non-profit community is an essential part of our integrated emergency response and recovery efforts. In May 2010, FEMA entered into a new MOU with National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD), a coalition of 50 national non-profit disaster relief organizations. The MOU serves as the basis for greater communication with NVOAD members, fostering more inclusive planning and ultimately enhancing services to disaster survivors. This past July, FEMA entered into a new MOA with the National Council on Independent Living to grant access to FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers and assist people with disabilities. In October 2010, FEMA and the American Red Cross signed a MOA that sets the framework for the Red Cross and FEMA to jointly lead the planning and coordination of mass care services, which will strengthen and expand the resources available to help shelter, feed, provide emergency first aid and deliver supplies to survivors of a disaster. This co-led

partnership between FEMA and the Red Cross will leverage the resourcing strengths of the federal government and the sheltering, feeding and bulk distribution expertise of the Red Cross.

V. The Role of Individuals, Families and Communities

In a disaster environment, we work not just with governmental entities and private sector organizations, but with individuals, families and communities as well. In these arenas, FEMA has worked to remove barriers to access for members of diverse communities. As an example, FEMA's Individual Assistance Division in the Recovery Directorate of the Office of Response and Recovery helps disaster survivors with housing, crisis counseling, low interest loans, legal services, disaster case management, and unemployment assistance, among other services.

Housing

The OIG report addressed FEMA's disaster housing assistance, noting the strides we have made towards implementing a comprehensive strategy for managing disaster housing resources. We value the OIG's input and are working actively to implement its recommendations.

One area the OIG reviewed was FEMA's development of a National Disaster Housing Strategy. The National Disaster Housing Task Force Concept of Operations was posted for public comment from December 9, 2010 to January 10, 2011. Comments received are currently in the adjudication process.

The OIG also assessed FEMA's plans to purchase, track and dispose of temporary housing units. FEMA's FY 2011 baseline inventory of temporary housing units will remain at 4,000 units ready for dispatch. Through auctions conducted by the GSA in early 2010, FEMA sold most of its excess inventory; however, bidders are still in the process of removing the housing units. As the OIG report states, we had previously stated that FEMA would close all supporting storage sites by the end of 2011. We are pleased to report that we are ahead of schedule.

Finally, the OIG recommended that FEMA strengthen state and local commitment to house affected citizens. Toward that end, FEMA has developed the Disaster Temporary Housing Operational Guide, which describes FEMA's approach for disaster-related sheltering and temporary housing needs. This guide was recently released for public comment, and FEMA is currently working to incorporate the extensive public input.

In an effort to increase the number of headquarters and regional staff trained to execute a disaster housing mission, the Individual Assistance Division developed a new training course entitled *Direct Housing Operations for Managers*, which provides a comprehensive introduction to all aspects of a FEMA direct housing mission. This four-day course includes detailed instruction on pre-operational planning, supply chain management, site management, information tracking requirements, contract management, and the recertification process. To date, a total of 220 FEMA staff from the field, regional offices, and headquarters have completed the course.

FEMA will continue to build upon the progress it has made, ensuring a strong and robust disaster housing program. However, incorporating individuals, families and communities into catastrophic disaster planning involves not just what we can do for people in the event of a disaster, but also how we can work with them to increase their overall preparedness.

Personal Preparedness

Family members, friends, co-workers and neighbors are our nation's 'first' first responders in the initial 72 hours following a disaster. They are often the first ones to help with evacuations, search and rescue, food, water, shelter, and medical care, and undertake many other critical response functions well before emergency responders arrive. Individuals and communities are key assets, not liabilities. They offer specialized knowledge and skills, provide neighbor-to-neighbor assistance, and allow emergency responders to focus their resources where they are most needed.

For that reason, personal preparedness remains a national priority. Nothing will contribute more to saving and sustaining lives than a citizenry prepared and provisioned to reduce its exposure to harm, or, when unavoidable harm comes, to function in an austere, reduced-services environment in the days immediately following a catastrophic disaster. Each family that takes even the most basic preparedness actions, such as having sufficient water and non-perishable food for at least 72 hours, frees responders and critical resources that can be used to provide for those who truly need assistance.

Incorporating People with Disabilities into Disaster Planning

Planning for disaster means that our planning must be inclusive of people of different ages and abilities. We need greater inclusion built into our participatory planning and preparedness activities. This includes meeting the access and functional needs of people with disabilities in preparing for and during disasters.

Historically, our nation's emergency management team—at all levels—has not planned well for meeting the access and functional needs of people with disabilities during disasters. Most of our planning has been supplemental, contained in annexes, and treated as special needs. However, we are now taking critical steps in the right direction to ensure that we plan for the whole community, integrating people with disabilities into all of our disaster planning, response and recovery scenarios.

In February 2010, FEMA established the Office of Disability Integration and Coordination, and in July 2010, established the first-ever Disability Working Group within FEMA. The Disability Working Group is responsible for ensuring that access and functional needs of children and adults with disabilities are fully integrated into all aspects of FEMA's disaster planning, preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation efforts initiated and coordinated at the federal level.

In October of last year, FEMA published Guidance on Planning for Integration of Functional Needs Support Services in General Population Shelters. This guidance for states provides comprehensive information and tools for meeting integrated sheltering requirements.

FEMA is also committed to placing Regional Disability Integration Specialists in each of FEMA's ten regions. Eight are already on board on a permanent full-time basis, and an additional one is in place on an acting basis.

When communities integrate the needs of children and adults with disabilities and others with access and functional needs into their community wide planning initiatives, they maximize resources, meet their obligations and strengthen their ability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate all hazards. FEMA is committed to initiatives that increase the participation of people with disabilities in emergency planning.

Children in Disasters

Similarly, we must all work together to meet the unique needs of children during a disaster, and ensure that their needs are considered at the outset of our planning and preparedness discussions. Emergency management officials at all levels need to plan and prepare for all who live in a community, including children, who comprise approximately 25 percent of the U.S. population. For that reason, FEMA established a Children's Working Group (CWG) responsible for coordinating the Agency's efforts, in partnership with other federal agencies and non-governmental stakeholders, to ensure that the needs of children are considered and integrated into all disaster planning, preparedness, response and recovery efforts initiated at the federal level.

As an example, in preparation for Hurricane Earl earlier this year, we pre-positioned commodities in preparation for the hurricane to make landfall, including water, meals and generators. However, military-style Meals Ready to Eat (MREs) and other provisions are not necessarily suitable for young children. As a result, we also pre-positioned commodities for children, including infant formula, baby food, electrolytes and diapers. We need to anticipate, understand and specifically plan for the needs of children.

FEMA has taken specific action in order to ensure that such planning occurs, including the following:

- Children's disaster-related needs have been integrated into several planning and guidance documents, including the second version of the Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101, which serves as a framework for all planning guidance.
- FEMA's 2010 Homeland Security Grant Program Guidance provides clarification as to how grant dollars may be used to support preparedness and planning activities for children.
- FEMA and the Department of Health and Human Services - Administration for Children and Families (ACF) finalized an interagency agreement in December 2009 allowing for the rapid

deployment of case managers by ACF to a disaster affected area when requested by a state following a presidentially declared disaster.

- FEMA's Emergency Management Institute developed a course entitled "Planning for Children and Disasters" which provides emergency managers and implementers of children's programs with guidance on meeting children's disaster related needs. EMI has reported 2,385 successful completions.
- FEMA has expanded its Student Tools for Emergency Planning (STEP) Program, reaching an additional 6,000 students this current school year.
- FEMA's Public Assistance Division published a fact sheet clarifying reimbursement eligibility for child care services under the Stafford Act. Guidance has been disseminated to FEMA Regions and key stakeholders.
- FEMA's Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS) recently launched a "Children and Disasters" page to be utilized by practitioners and others in the emergency management community.
- Members of the CWG collaborated with the American Red Cross and other pediatric experts to develop an Infant and Toddler Shelter Supply List, identifying the basic items necessary to sustain infants and children in mass care shelters and emergency congregate care environments. This list has been integrated into various FEMA planning and guidance documents.
- FEMA is partnering with the Department of Justice - Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Department of Health and Human Services - Administration for Children and Families - Office of Child Care, to support the development of emergency preparedness planning guidance and overall efforts of addressing children's disaster related needs.
- FEMA and the Department of Education co-led a Youth Summit focused on supporting a structured and comprehensive approach to preparedness education for youth. Participants included federal, state, tribal and local governments, non-governmental stakeholders, pediatric experts, and emergency management specialists from Australia, Chile, Israel, and New Zealand.

CWG serves as the primary point of contact for FEMA's Emergency Support Function #6 (Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services) coordination efforts in response to Presidentially-declared disasters to address the needs of children.

- Through the direction of USAID, FEMA coordinated the procurement of infant supplies to support evacuees of the Haiti Earthquake waiting to depart from the Port Au Prince Airport. Supplies were delivered approximately 12 hours after the request was received.

- FEMA and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) are in the process of developing a cooperative agreement which would allow FEMA to provide funding and other resources (i.e., search for and reunification of missing children, office space for the National Emergency Child Locator Center and FEMA staffing to support call center operations) to the NCMEC.

We will continue to incorporate everyone into our disaster planning, recognizing that all populations help to make up the emergency management community.

VI. The “Whole Community” Initiative

As we work to implement the recommendations of the OIG report and make improvements to FEMA’s programs, we must be sure to avoid viewing these initiatives as separate from one another. We must view all of the work FEMA does in concert with the rest of the emergency management community as part of a broad plan for addressing the demands and challenges of a catastrophic disaster.

To ensure that our efforts become part of an interconnected plan of action, we are focused on our “Whole Community” initiative. This initiative will continue to leverage the capabilities that both governmental and non-governmental entities play in preparing for a catastrophic disaster.

We cannot effectively respond to a catastrophic disaster alone. Our planning and preparedness scenarios require all parties to pitch in, including FEMA and its partners at the federal level; state, local and tribal governments; non-governmental organizations in the non-profit, faith-based and private sector communities; and most importantly, diverse individuals, families, and communities, who continue to be our most important assets and allies in our ability to respond to and recover from a major disaster.

As the name of the initiative indicates, it is truly the *whole* community that must be prepared to respond in ways that extend beyond the normal paradigms in which we have traditionally operated. As a result, when we at FEMA address our own preparedness and response capabilities, we now do it through the “Whole Community” framework. And it is through that lens that we will work to implement the recommendations from the recent OIG report in order to improve upon our preparedness for the next catastrophic disaster.

“Whole Community” uses planning assumptions for catastrophic disasters that are based on the worst case scenarios. These scenarios are designed to challenge preparedness at all levels of government and force innovative, non-traditional solutions as part of the response strategy to such events.

To begin this change in national preparedness practice and doctrine, we are enlisting the active participation of the whole community, partnering with emergency management, public health, security, law enforcement, critical infrastructure and medical organizations to plan, train, organize and heighten awareness as a team.

The “Whole Community” initiative identifies the highest priority tasks necessary to save and sustain lives and stabilize a community or region during the crucial first 72 hours after a catastrophe. This initiative also addresses the fundamental pillars of the entire emergency management spectrum. While the initial 72-hour period after an incident is the most critical in saving and sustaining lives, the Whole Community approach spans not only response operations following a disaster, but also recovery, prevention, protection, and mitigation activities that occur before, during and after a catastrophic event.

VII. Conclusion

FEMA’s mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure we work together as a nation to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards. Too often we have overlooked our role as supporting citizens and first responders. The “Whole Community” initiative recognizes that FEMA is not the nation’s emergency management team – FEMA is just part of the team.

FEMA continues to play an integral role as part of the emergency management community. However, we know that we cannot and should not do it alone. We know of the capabilities of federal agencies, which can be leveraged in the event of a disaster to provide a robust federal response. We know of the importance of effective coordination with state, local and tribal governments, who provide direct, on the ground experience, and who usually have initial and primary responsibility for disaster response. We know that non-governmental organizations, like faith-based and non-profit groups, and private sector entities, possess knowledge, assets and services that government simply cannot provide. An effective disaster response involves tapping into all of these resources.

Finally, and most importantly, we know of the great capacity of individuals to care for their families, friends, neighbors and fellow community members, making our citizens force multipliers rather than liabilities. Together, we make up the whole community, and we all have an important role to play. We must engage all of our societal capacity, both within and beyond FEMA, to work together as a team.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the importance of engaging the whole community in FEMA’s preparedness for the next catastrophic disaster. I look forward to working with you and the Office of Inspector General as we continue to implement its recommendations and ensure a stronger and more agile preparedness, protection, response, recovery and mitigation capability.

I am prepared to answer any questions the Committee may have.