

4. International Cooperation

International solidarity was demonstrated from the first hours of the disaster. Upon reestablishment of communications systems with the international community, specific aid was solicited according to priorities to attend the following needs:

1. Specialized search-and-rescue equipment to extract persons trapped in destroyed buildings. Heavy machinery such as cranes to remove rubble.
2. Equipment for second and third level hospitals, and particularly rehabilitation equipment as well as supplies for operating and recovery rooms, intensive care units, maternity wards and clinical laboratories.
3. Equipment and supplies for suturing, intravenous perfusion, x-ray films and refrigeration units.

During the first 10 days after the earthquakes, the General Comptroller's Ministry of the Federal District registered 177 international flights from 31 countries with 1,088 tons of aid, Table 24. (40) (41) These diverse donations went directly to various institutions, (Table 25). Of these, 748 tons (69%) were not solicited by national authorities and consisted of non-priority items such as medicines, food, clothes, blankets and supplies. The comparison of supplies and other items received and utilized appears in Table 26. Note the deficit that occurred with respect to some of the solicited articles such as x-ray film, anesthetics and immobilization materials.

There was ample availability of blood and derivatives thanks to voluntary donors throughout the city. UNDRO informed that as of October 1, 1985, contributions from United Nations organisms, government organizations, voluntary agencies and the International Red Cross had reached a sum of 10,750,000 dollars, and that more aid was expected.

Table 24. Mexico Earthquake, International Aid (from September 20-30, 1985)

Category of Aid	Tons	Percent
Medicines	335	31.0
Clothes and blankets	259	24.0
Food	154	14.0
Rescue equipment	150	13.6
Tools	73	6.7
Machines and vehicles	69	6.3
Medical instruments	48	4.4
TOTAL	1,088	100.0

Source: Secretaría de la Contraloría General de la Federación, September, 1985.

Table 25. International Aid and Receiving Institutions, Mexico, D.F., 1985

Receiving Institution	Tons	Percent
Federal Government	335	30.7
Mexican Red Cross	210	19.3
Embassies	251	23.0
Private institutions	292	27.0
TOTAL	1,088	100.0

Source: Secretaría de la Contraloría General de la Federación, September, 1985.

Table 26. International Aid Received and Used in the Emergency Phase, Mexico, D.F., 1985

Item	Received Boxes/Packets	Pieces	Used Pieces
Medicines (analgesics, sedatives, antibiotics)	5,493	28,614	27,595
Disposable syringes	1,014	67,800	10,080
Needles	710	12,950	12,600
Antiseptics	128	2,007	368 Lt.
Supplies for immobilization	159	0	6,426
Medical supplies (bandages, gauze, adhesive tape, absorbent pads, cotton, etc.)	2,428	8,923	10,332 Mt.
I.V. solutions	3,808	4,650	6,778 Lt.
Anesthetics	42	608	2,500
Surgical material	2,166	5,393	789
X-ray equipment (and film)	133	0	1,879
Biologicals	10	200	50,000 Dos.
Blood and derivatives	231	0	1,732 Units
Non-classified medical material	20,469	26,574	0
Others (blankets, tents, food, clothes, etc.)	13,969	2,789	0
Search-and-rescue equipment, cranes and towing vehicles for removing rubble	540	6,421	0
TOTAL	51,293	166,929	-

Source: Información de la Secretaría de Salud, Departamento del Distrito Federal y Cruz Roja Mexicana.

International aid after a disaster can be invaluable when it meets a specific need. The French government provided specialized equipment and trained personnel to help in the search-and-rescue operations.