

ADRA's History

Today

ADRA is one of the leading non-governmental relief organisations in the world and was granted General Consultative Status by the United Nations in 1997. ADRA employs nearly 5,000 staff members who currently work in approximately 110 countries worldwide. As new challenges and needs arise, ADRA continues to strive to realise its mission of reflecting God's love through compassionate acts of humanitarian service.

1956

ADRA's humanitarian work was first established in November 1956 by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to provide relief and welfare. The organisation was originally called Seventh-day Adventist Welfare Service (SAWS).

1958

SAWS organised relief shipments to 22 countries with a total value of about \$USD 485,000.

1962

SAWS provided relief shipments valued at \$USD 2.3 million to 29 countries. During this period, countries benefited included those in South America and the Middle East, sites of major disasters.

1970

By the mid-1970s, the organisation began to broaden its mission from disaster relief into programmes leading to long-term development.

ADRA offices in Sweden and Norway applied for government funding to assist humanitarian aid projects.

This regional office was established-then known as the Northern European Division Development Aid Department.

1973

As Seventh-day Adventist Welfare Service (SAWS) work expanded, its name was changed to Seventh-day Adventist World Service.

1978

This regional office (Northern European Division Development Aid Department) hired a full time director based in St. Albans, England.

1983

SAWS underwent yet another name change to better reflect its overall mission and activities, becoming the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA).

ADRA's work grew rapidly with major programmes in several countries emphasising community development, food distribution, institutional development, and ongoing disaster relief. ADRA's activities included: building health clinics in Africa, assisting hurricane victims in Central America, teaching hygiene and health to children in Asia, and promoting awareness of worldwide humanitarian needs through ADRA's Global Village in the United States.

1984

The Northern European Division Development Aid Department became known as ADRA Trans-Europe.

1991

ADRA Trans-Europe registered with the UK Charity Commission.

1997

ADRA became one of the leading non-governmental relief organisations in the world. In 1997 the Agency was granted General Consultative Status by the United Nations, a unique opportunity giving ADRA added voice in the international community.

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