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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alexandria, VA - On Nov. 13, 1985, the eruption of the Nevado del Ruiz volcano in Colombia killed more than 23,000 people. Geoscientists at the U.S. Geological Survey's Cascades Volcano Observatory in Vancouver, Wash., moved to action. Having studied the warning signs and responded to the eruption of Mount St. Helens five years earlier, they knew from experience that the Nevado del Ruiz disaster could have been prevented. Their advocacy paved the way for the formation of the Volcano Disaster Assistance Program (VDAP) in 1986. VDAP is the world's first and only international volcano response team. In the January issue of EARTH Magazine, VDAP's growth and evolution over 30 years are chronicled, highlighting the team's past successes and goals for the future.

VDAP deploys people and equipment, as well as building scientific capacity in countries all over the world. Since its inception, VDAP has responded to more than 30 major volcanic crises and strengthened capacity through partnerships in 12 countries, including Mexico, Tanzania, and Indonesia. The work, however, is changing. VDAP has always been training international partners to become self-sufficient, but as that local capacity has grown, VDAP scientists are increasingly serving in remote advisory roles, rather than traveling to eruption sites. Read more on what VDAP teams do and how VDAP's roles are changing in EARTH Magazine: <http://www.earthmagazine.org/article/life-saving-diplomacy-volcano-disas...>

The January issue of EARTH Magazine is now available online at www.earthmagazine.org. It includes stories about how and when the first humans arrived in America — casting a skeptical eye on the popular land-bridge theory — and about an unexpected disruption in Earth's largest jet stream, with the potential for such disruptions to increase in a changing climate. To explore more about the science of our planet visit www.earthmagazine.org.

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Keep up to date with the latest happenings in Earth, energy and environment news with EARTH Magazine online at: www.earthmagazine.org. Published by the American Geosciences Institute, EARTH is your source for the science behind the headlines.

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The American Geosciences Institute is a nonprofit federation of geoscientific and professional associations that represents more than 250,000 geologists, geophysicists and other earth scientists. Founded in 1948, AGI provides information services to geoscientists, serves as a voice of shared interests in the profession, plays a major role in strengthening geoscience education, and strives to increase public awareness of the vital role the geosciences play in society's use of resources, resiliency to natural hazards, and interaction with the environment.

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