

**THE U.S. RESPONSE TO EAST AFRICAN FAMINES
AND THE FUTURE OUTLOOK FOR FOOD AID
IN AFRICA**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
**COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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**THE U.S. RESPONSE TO EAST AFRICAN
FAMINES AND THE FUTURE OUTLOOK FOR
FOOD AID IN AFRICA**

TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2003

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:15 a.m., in Room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Henry J. Hyde (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Chairman HYDE. The Committee will come to order.

Well, thank you all for joining us this morning. As our Nation faces continued threats from around the world which absorb a good deal of our attention and energy, there are other serious problems in the world which also demand our attention.

Today we focus on the war of hunger and starvation in East Africa. When it comes to providing food aid for countries in need, the United States is number one. The United States has regularly provided more than half of the food aid to countries in need. In June 2002, the Committee on International Relations held a hearing on this very issue. The focus at that time was on the terrible drought sweeping through the southern region of Africa. That famine has been averted in Southern Africa, with the possible exception of Zimbabwe. The purpose of this hearing is to focus on another food crisis occurring in the countries of Eastern Africa. We will hear testimony from the Administration and the United Nations on the effectiveness of food availability and delivery and the general foreign assistance objectives in Africa.

In 2000, large-scale famine was averted in Ethiopia and Eritrea due to both donor support provided by the United States and the good work of the United Nations World Food Programme. However, 3 years later, an estimated 15 million people in Ethiopia and Eritrea are at risk of starvation. The crops in 2002 yielded a very small harvest, and, last summer early warning systems began to predict a dire harvest in the Horn of Africa. Since August 2002, the United States has provided approximately 430,000 metric tons of food, equal to \$179 million. There is little left in the delivery channels for the remainder of this year. Congress appropriated \$1.2 billion in the emergency supplement bill for Africa this year. Through the untiring efforts of Congressman Wolf and others, Congress was able to provide an additional \$250 million in aid to Africa through September 2004.

The war against famines can be won. Famine is not about waiting for the rains that didn't come. It is about failing to enact policies that ensure a country's means to cope with expected adversity. Famine is about the deliberate manipulation of resources for political gains. Famine is about denying people the right to own their own land, stifling free enterprise and controlling the means by which to produce food. Famine can be a symptom of greed, corruption and misguided economics.

This morning we are interested in hearing about the political developments within Ethiopia and Eritrea and the commitments by these governments in meeting the long-term development needs of their people. How much they have opened their markets and invested in private sector agricultural development? Saving lives in crisis takes priority over long-term development needs. However, my sense is that genuine development in Africa must be founded on sound investments in agriculture in order to avert the vicious famine cycle. And we also need to pay more attention to the HIV/AIDS pandemic which has so adversely impacted the productivity of the farmers.

The battle against hunger on the African continent presents us with an opportunity to press for genuine development strategies that will end the struggle of recurring famines.

I would now like to turn to my friend and colleague, the Ranking Member of the Committee, Mr. Lantos.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hyde follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE HENRY J. HYDE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, AND CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Thank you for joining us this morning.

As our nation faces continued threats from around the world which absorb a good deal of our attention and energy, there are other serious problems in the world which also demand our attention. Today we focus on the war of hunger and starvation in East Africa.

When it comes to providing food aid for countries in need, the United States is number one. The United States has regularly provided more than half of the food aid to countries in need. In June 2002, the Committee on International Relations held a hearing on this very issue. The focus at that time was on the terrible drought sweeping through the southern region of Africa. That famine has been averted in Southern Africa, with the possible exception of Zimbabwe. The purpose of this hearing is to focus on another food crisis occurring in the countries of Eastern Africa. We will hear testimony from the Administration and the United Nations on the effectiveness of food availability and delivery and the general foreign assistance objectives in Africa.

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I would now like to turn to my friend and colleague, the Ranking Member of the Committee, Mr. Lantos.

Mr. LANTOS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And before addressing this very serious and important issue, let me express my personal delight at seeing you back in the chair in robust health. I know I speak for all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. We are delighted to have you back.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for convening this hearing to discuss the food crisis in East Africa. I also want to thank my friend, Frank Wolf, and other distinguished speakers for coming today to shed light on this very critical matter.

I particularly want to thank Professor Mesfin for taking time to testify before our Committee. As you know, he is the cofounder of Ethiopian Human Rights Council and has just returned from Ethiopia, where he is standing trial for human rights activities.

I want him to know that Chairman Wolf, the Republican Cochair of the Human Rights Caucus, and myself, the Democratic Chair of the Human Rights Caucus, are paying the closest attention to your trial, and we are fully supportive of you.

Mr. Chairman, we all remember the terrible Ethiopian famine in 1984 that killed nearly a million innocent people and sparked a massive international relief effort. It was a horrendous tragedy, one in which the Marxist government of Ethiopia and international donors made very costly mistakes.

Innocent lives were lost because the Mengistu regime spent its precious resources on a civil war and international donors took far too long to react to the looming crisis.

Just 2 years ago we again dealt with a famine in Ethiopia that threatened nearly 16 million people with starvation. Ethiopia and Eritrea were fighting a mindless border war that claimed a hundred thousand lives, cost vast fortunes, and displaced more than a million people.

And now in 2003, Ethiopia and Eritrea are preoccupied again with their ongoing border dispute, while new famine emerges. In spite of heroic international efforts, thousands may die of starvation. Children who survive will be impaired for life, both physically and mentally because of the lack of nutrition.

Mr. Chairman, it is an outrage that these two governments whose citizens live on the very edge of survival cannot end their belligerent relationship, settle their disputes and get on with addressing the most critical economical, social and political needs of their people. Instead of developing the great agricultural potential of Ethiopia and exploiting Eritrea's strategic port, these two coun-

tries find themselves again appealing to the international community for help.

Under the circumstances I described, it is a temptation to throw up one's hands and focus the scarce food aid on countries where the governments are not engaged in some mindless folly.

But, Mr. Chairman, we have a moral imperative to ensure that the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea are not forced to starve to death because their leaders are both inept and corrupt. The wealthy nations of the world, including our own, must respond in a robust way. I am very pleased that our Agency for International Development and others are working hard to get food quickly to the region.

Mr. Chairman, looking back at the 1984 famine, we have improved our capacity to detect droughts and create food pipelines much earlier. Still, these early warning systems are just tools that generate information. They do not guarantee the wisdom and good judgment of political leaders in the region to make food security for their citizens a priority above all others.

The costs of insane, foolhardy military engagements, bad government and outmoded agricultural policies is way too high. If the millions of dollars poured into emergency food relief were spent up front on effective systems to irrigate, grow, process and sell food, what a different Africa it could be.

Mr. Chairman, today we have to take a good hard look at the persistence of famine in East Africa and judge where political leaders and policymakers have succeeded and where they have failed.

But let no one mistake this important discussion as a rejection of meeting the immediate food needs of the people of East Africa. The United States and the international community will not allow a repeat of the 1984 famine.

Mr. Chairman, a starving child knows no borders. A starving child knows nothing of politics. A starving child knows no budget priorities. A starving child only knows that he or she is hungry. I believe that every child has the right to expect that leaders respond to that need.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you, Mr. Lantos.

The Chair would like to acknowledge the presence of several members of the ambassadorial corps from Africa here, and we are very pleased that you are here to attend this important hearing.

Members who have statements will be free to submit them, and they will be made a part of the record at the opening of the hearing.

I now would like to welcome our colleague from Virginia, Mr. Frank Wolf. He is serving his 12th term in Congress, and as a Member of the Committee on Appropriations, he serves as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary.

One of the House's leading advocates for human rights, Mr. Wolf is Cochairman of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus. He has traveled to Sierra Leone, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and recently to Eritrea and Ethiopia to witness firsthand the suffering of the people at the hands of famine.

We are honored to have you appear before the Committee today, Mr. Wolf. Please proceed with a 5-minute summary of your statement. Your full statement will be made a part of the record. Frank.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE FRANK R. WOLF, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF VIRGINIA, AND CHAIRMAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, JUSTICE, STATE, AND THE JUDICIARY, COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. WOLF. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My statement is about 2 minutes. Then I am going to show about a 2½-minute video. So it will be very short. I want to thank you for holding these hearings.

I also want to pay tribute to the USAID employees and its Administrator, Andrew Nastios. I think they have done an outstanding job. America has really been in the forefront of this, largely because of their efforts.

Mr. Chairman, between last December 29 and this January 4, I went to Eritrea and Ethiopia with my Chief of Staff, Dan Scandling. I first went to the region in 1984 in response to the horrendous famine. At that time, I didn't think a famine of that proportion could ever happen again.

It is happening again, and in some respects on a larger scale than in 1984. Eleven million people are at risk of starvation, and several weeks ago, that number was growing. Three million are on what they call the so-called watch list.

Compounding this crisis, as you said, is a high population growth, from 45 million in 1984 to 69 million today. The AIDS epidemic is also devastating the country, with 300,000 AIDS deaths in the past several years and more than 3 million people believed to be HIV positive.

Worse still is bad governance, which exacerbated a 2½-year border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, literally over nothing. On our trip we went up to the edge and nothing has changed. It is a desert area with mines and no change, and yet there are a lot of resources that could have fed people.

But that is just in Ethiopia and Eritrea. All together, 30 million people are at risk of malnutrition and starvation in Africa alone, a number that is of biblical proportion. Add to this parts of Asia like North Korea, and even in Argentina, and you can begin to see the global nature of this crisis.

That is why I recently sent a letter to Secretary General Kofi Annan urging him to appoint a special envoy to respond to hunger crises throughout the world and raise this issue to a much higher and urgent level. He appointed a special envoy for HIV/AIDS. Similarly, he could appoint an envoy who would report to him to go to the world and ask those who have not given to give.

As you said in your opening statement, 50 percent or more of the food comes from the United States. The EU has only given 27 percent. The special envoy could be operating out of the World Food Programme in Rome with Jim Morris, but there ought to be a special envoy.

It is hard to get people to focus on this humanitarian crisis with the war in Iraq, the situation in North Korea and the continued war on terror. If the Western media would focus as much attention

on what is happening in Africa as it does to promoting TV shows like *Joe Millionaire*, *The Bachelor* and *American Idol*, perhaps much more could be done to solve this problem.

Let me close by showing you a very short video taken by Dan Scandling, my Chief of Staff. That will take my testimony to the end.

[Video played.]

Mr. WOLF. This was 90 kilometers from Addis Ababa. We were there and also in the north where we were in 1984.

That child is 5 years old.

Same scenes as in 1984 except they keep the people in the villages and don't move into the refugee camps as they did in 1984.

All of the fat has been taken out of the buttocks.

Skin disease on this child. They can't walk or stand up.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wolf follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE FRANK R. WOLF, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF VIRGINIA, AND CHAIRMAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, JUSTICE, STATE, AND THE JUDICIARY, COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Thank you Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing.

Earlier this year between December 29 through January 4, I went to Eritrea and Ethiopia. I first went to that region in 1984 in response to a horrendous famine.

At that time, I didn't think a famine of that proportion could happen again. It is happening again and on a scale far greater than in 1984.

Eleven million people are at risk of starvation and that number is growing; 3 million people are on "watch list."

Compounding this crisis is high population growth, from 45 million in 1984 to 69 million today. The AIDS epidemic is also devastating the country with 300,000 AIDS deaths in the past several years and more than 3 million people believed to be HIV positive. Worse still is bad governance which exacerbated a 2½-year border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea literally over nothing.

But that is just in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Altogether 30 million people are at risk of malnutrition and starvation in Africa alone. Add to this parts of Asia like North Korea and even in Argentina and you can begin to see the global nature of this crisis. That is why I recently sent a letter to Secretary General Kofi Annan urging him to appoint a special UN envoy to respond to hunger crises throughout the world and to raise this issue to a much higher and urgent level. (Submit the letter for the record.)

It's hard to get people to focus on this humanitarian crisis with the war in Iraq, the situation in North Korea and the continuing war on terror.

If the media would focus as much attention on what is happening in Africa as it does promoting TV shows like "Joe Millionaire", "The Bachelor" and "American Idol", perhaps more could be done to solve the problem.

Let me end it there because I want to show you a short video taken during my trip. Its images are more powerful than any of my words.

Trip Report: Ethiopia and Eritrea

December 29, 2002 - January 4, 2003



Rep. Frank R. Wolf
10th District, Virginia

Available online at:
<http://www.house.gov/wolf>

JANUARY 8, 2003

Babies wailing and screeching, desperately trying to get nourishment from their mothers' breasts.

Two- and three-year-olds so severely malnourished that they cannot stand, much less crawl or walk, their pencil-thin legs so frail that they could be snapped like a twig with little or no effort.

Young boys and girls with bloated bellies. A teenager whose legs are no thicker than my wrist.

Drinking water almost non-existent – a four-hour walk each way just to find some. Fields scorched. Crops failed.

River beds dry as a bone. Hand-dug collecting ponds for rain so sunbaked that the earth has cracked.

Disease. Despair.

These are some of the horrific sites I witnessed last week in Ethiopia, which once again is facing a famine of catastrophic proportions.

I spent a week in Ethiopia in 1984 – when nearly one million people died of starvation – including two nights in a feeding camp. The squalid conditions of the camps and the suffering faces of the children, mothers and elderly was haunting and unforgettable. What I saw – and experienced – changed me forever. I never thought I would see something like that again. I have. Last week.

By Easter, thousands of Ethiopians could be dead from starvation. Children living in villages just 90 miles from the capital city, Addis Ababa, which is easily accessible by



The distended stomach of this 6-year-old boy illustrates the severity of the hunger problem in Ethiopia. 11 million Ethiopians are at risk.

truck, are already near death. Conditions in villages in more remote areas of the country are significantly worse.

Dire Situation

While the government of Ethiopia is out in front of trying to draw attention to the crisis – unlike in 1984 when the Mengistu government tried to keep the famine secret until a BBC camera crew broke the story – what makes this year's crisis more horrific is that the population of Ethiopia has increased from 45 million in 1984 to 69 million today. In addition, HIV/AIDS is spreading throughout the country and Ethiopia's 2 1/2-year border war with neighboring Eritrea has drained precious resources and led to thousands of displaced people and families, particularly in remote areas of the country.

With each crisis – drought, war, disease – more families become destitute and completely dependent on others for their welfare and survival. The repeated droughts have made more people vulnerable to hunger and hunger-related diseases, sharply increasing the danger of outright starvation among groups that may have been able to survive previous crop failures and livestock losses.

This also is a tough neighborhood, with Sudan bordering to the west and Somalia to the east. These countries are struggling to overcome internal turmoil of their own and refugees from each have crossed into Ethiopia and are living in refugee camps.

But perhaps the greatest difficulty is getting the world to respond. The focus in capital cities around the

globe is the war on terror, Iraq and North Korea.

How Could This Happen?

I do not believe this situation should ever have been allowed to develop. Does anyone really believe that the world would turn a blind eye if this crisis were unfolding in France or Australia? If the photographs in this report were of Norwegian children wouldn't the world be rushing to help? Is not the value of an Ethiopian child or Eritrean mother the same in the eyes of God?

This disaster has been building since last fall, yet there has been little mention of it in the Western media, let alone any in depth reports. Without graphic photographs and videotape, foreign governments will not feel the pressure to act.

The situation in Ethiopia is dire and many believe if immediate action is not taken to address the looming crisis, the number of people who could die from starvation could surpass those who perished during the 1984 -1985 drought. In 1984, 8 million were in need of food aid. Today, more than 11 million people



Infants and children are the most vulnerable. Most Ethiopians in the rural parts of the country are living on about 900 calories a day.

— just slightly less than the combined population of Maryland and Virginia — are presently at risk and that number is growing every day.

Last year's crops produced little or nothing, even in parts of the country that normally provide surpluses of food. The demand for international food aid is tremendous. I was told there is enough food in the country to meet January's needs and part of February's, although at reduced levels. Incredibly, there is nothing in the pipeline to deal with March, April, May, or the rest of the year. Even if ships loaded with grain were to leave today, many would not make it in time to avert disaster.

Villagers are living on about 900 calories a day. The average American lives on 2,200 to 2,400 calories a day.

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An elderly woman at a feeding station in the northern part of the country showed me her monthly allotment of wheat: it would have fit into a bowling ball bag.

A man working under the hot African sun with fellow villagers to dig a massive rain collecting pond — each carrying 50-pound bags of dirt up from the bottom of the pit — told me he had not had a drink of water all day and didn't know if he would eat that night. It would depend on whether his children had food.

No Water

Water — for drinking and bathing — is almost non-existent, and what is available, is putrid. There is no medicine — and even if there was something as simple as an aspirin there is no water with which to wash it down. Disease is rampant.

During my trip I visited villages in both the north and south of the country. I went to a food distribution center and a health clinic. I talked with farmers who had already begun to sell off their livestock and mothers who did not know where or when their children would get their next meal. I met with U.S. State De-



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partment officials and NGOs. I also met with Prime Minister Meles and a number of relief officials in his government.

The government's decision not to establish feeding camps is a wise one. The camps only exacerbate the crisis because they allow diseases to spread much more quickly and take people away from their homes and albeit limited support systems. In 1984, many families traveled great distances to reach the camps and by the time they got there were often near death. Moreover, villagers who left for the camps and somehow managed to survive had nothing to return to because they had lost their homes and sold their livestock.

Fortunately, relief organizations, including U.S. AID and the United Nations World Food Programme, have developed an early warning system to better predict the effects of the looming crisis and have been sounding the alarm since the fall.



This 3-year-old girl is one of the many starving Ethiopian children.



Fields are scorched and holding ponds for rainwater (above) are so sunbaked that the earth is cracked. There has been a total crop failure.

Nevertheless, they are facing an uphill battle. Donor fatigue is a very real problem.

Competing World Crises

Getting the world – and the United States, in particular – to focus on the issue is difficult because of the war on terrorism, the situation in Iraq and the growing crisis in North Korea.

Since August 2002, the United States has provided approximately 430,000 metric tons of food, valued at \$179 million. This amount constitutes approximately 25 percent of the total need in the country. The U.S. government will need to do more to avert a disaster of biblical proportions.

Before leaving on the trip, a number of well read people in the Washington area looked at me quiz-

zically when I told them I was going to Ethiopia. They all asked why? When I told them that the country was facing another famine along the scale of 1984, they were dumbfounded.

Time is of the essence. A village can slip dramatically in just a matter of weeks. Many of the children I saw last week will be dead by early February and those who do somehow miraculously survive will be severely retarded. The world cannot afford to wait any longer.

I also visited neighboring Eritrea, where the situation is not much better. Widespread crop failures are expected as a result of the drought. Compounding the situation are the lingering effects of its war with Ethiopia, which ended in December 2000. While nearly 200,000 refugees and displaced persons have

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been reintegrated into society following the truce, almost 60,000 have been unable to return to their homes due to the presence of land mines, unexploded ordnance, insecurity or the simple fact that the infrastructure near their homes has been completely destroyed.

Recommendations

- Donors, including the United States, must make prompt and significant food-aid pledges to help Ethiopia overcome its current crisis. The food pipeline could break down as early as next month if donors do not act immediately. There are a number of countries, Canada and France, for instance, that can and should do more.

- The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) must work to ensure that the U.S. assistance is released as quickly as possible.

- When President Bush visits Africa, he should consider going to Ethiopia. I believe he would be moved by what he sees.

- The Bush Administration should make an effort to rally public support similar to what was done during the 1984-85 famine. Perhaps the new director of faith-based initiatives at USAID should serve as the coordinator for such an effort.

- Donor support also must include water, seeds and medicine as well as veterinary assistance.

- The Ethiopian government should take its case to capitals around the globe, sending representatives to donor nations armed with photographs of dying children to put a face on the growing crisis. Regrettably, if they do not ask, they will not receive.

- The Ethiopian government must contribute additional food aid from its own resources as it did in 2000 and 2002 as a sign of leadership and commitment to the welfare of its people.

- More must be done to develop long-term strategies to tackle the root causes of the food shortages in Ethiopia, like improving irrigation and developing drought-resistant crops. The government must develop a 10- or 15-year plan designed to help end the constant cycle of massive food shortages. A well developed plan would go a long way toward reassuring the international community that the country wants to end its dependence on handouts.

- The Ethiopian government also should do more to help diversify its economy. Its largest export – coffee – is subject to huge price fluctuations in the world market and rather than exporting hides and leather to Italy and China – only to come back



Since August, the United States has provided \$179 million in food aid to Ethiopia.

as belts, purses and shoes – the government should work to attract business that will make these products on Ethiopian soil.

- The government of Ethiopia also should consider a sweeping land reform policy that would allow farmers to own their property rather than the government owning all the country's land, a vestige of the country's socialist days.

- The media needs to more aggressively pursue this looming crisis. It was responsible for making the world aware of the terrible famine that was occurring in 1984 and has the ability to let the world know about the tragedy unfolding again.

- Many of the same issues that apply to Ethiopia apply to Eritrea. Both countries are in desperate need of assistance.

In closing, I want to thank all the people – from government officials in both Ethiopia and Eritrea to U.S. officials and NGOs and missionaries in both countries – who are working around the clock to deal with this crisis. I also want to thank U.S. Ambassador to Eritrea Donald McConnell and U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia Aurelia Brazeal and their respective staffs for all they do. They are outstanding representatives of the U.S. government. Special thanks go to Jack Doutrich in Eritrea and Karen Freeman, Jo Raisin and Make-da Tsegaye in Ethiopia. Roy "Reb" Brownell with USAID in Washington also deserves special recognition.

Finally, I want to thank Lt. Col. Malcom Shorter, who accompanied me on the trip, and Dan Scandling, my chief of staff, who took all the photographs and videotaped the trip. ■

Chairman HYDE. Thank you, Mr. Wolf, very much.

Mr. WOLF. I would hope the Committee could urge again Kofi Annan, who I know has his hands full on Iraq, to appoint that special envoy, because USAID and our government has done a very good job.

The failure has been that we have not gotten enough food from some of the EU countries and some of the other countries around the world. An envoy could call on these countries and ask and I think we would get a lot more food into those regions.

Chairman HYDE. We will weigh in as a Committee on a bipartisan basis to try and keep this issue alive.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you very much.

I would like to welcome Alan Larson, the Under Secretary of State for Economic Business and Agricultural Affairs. As the senior economic advisor to Secretary Powell, Mr. Larson's responsibilities include the entire range of international economic policy.

Since joining the Department of State in 1973, Mr. Larson has served in the Economic Sections of the U.S. Embassies in Jamaica, Zaire and Sierra Leone, and as U.N. Ambassador to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris. Welcome to Mr. Larson.

Our next witness is Andrew Nastios, Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development. His career includes service as Director of USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance from 1989 to 1991. Later, during the Administration of President George H. W. Bush, Mr. Nastios served as an Assistant Administrator of USAID, responsible for food and humanitarian assistance.

Before assuming his current position, he was Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority and Secretary for Administration and Finance for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. He also has served as Vice President of World Vision. Welcome to you, Mr. Nastios.

I would like to welcome Dr. Jim Butler, Deputy Under Secretary For Farm and Foreign Agricultural Assistance Services, the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As Deputy he provides leadership to agencies and programs within the Farm and Foreign Agricultural Service Mission.

Prior to his appointment in November 2002, Dr. Butler was USDA's Deputy Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs. His experience includes serving as a sheep and wool specialist for Colorado State University, as Deputy Vice Chancellor of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M, and as Executive Vice President of the National Wool Growers Association.

Because the witness for our third panel, Ms. Sisulu, from the United Nations World Food Programme has to catch a flight to another engagement, I will ask her to join panel II, and we welcome you, Ms. Sisulu. If you will sit at the table.

She is the Deputy Executive Director for Policy and External Affairs of the United Nations World Food Programme. Ms. Sisulu's career began in 1974 in Soweto, South Africa, where she was a high school teacher.

With the end of apartheid and the advent of black majority rule, she was named a special adviser to the National Minister of Education.

Her diplomatic career began in 1997, when she was appointed South Africa's Consul General in New York. Two years later she came to Washington to serve as the South African Ambassador to the United States until her appointment as Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme in 2003.

We are honored to have all of you appear before the Committee today. Please proceed with a 5-minute summary of your statements, and your full statement will be made a part of the record. We will start with you, Dr. Larson.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ALAN P. LARSON, UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ECONOMIC, BUSINESS AND AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. LARSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Committee, we really appreciate your leadership in pressing on this important issue of famine and food security. I would also like to thank Mr. Wolf for the valuable and moving report on his trip to the Horn of Africa.

Famine weakens and ultimately kills not only individuals but entire societies, fostering deep poverty, displacement of people, instability and the collapse of governments. Fighting famine, therefore, is both a humanitarian imperative and also a foreign policy priority.

The United States does have a strong leadership tradition in fighting famine. We are the world's largest provider of emergency food assistance, and U.S. Development assistance has helped farmers around the world increase their harvests.

As a result the blight of famine has receded from many parts of the world. Today, however, we face a particularly difficult challenge. In the words of the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, quote, HIV/AIDS, food insecurity, and failure of government comprise a triad of crises leading to unparalleled catastrophe in Africa, unquote.

The Secretary General, in a meeting that the United States initiated in New York, has called for a second green revolution, one that would benefit African farmers. The Administration is making a strong effort working with the United Nations, world food programs and other partners to mobilize an effective international response.

As Mr. Natsios will detail, we moved quickly to respond to urgent needs in Southern Africa and the Horn of Africa. We have also sought to ensure a strong policy framework at home for food security. The Administration and the Congress have worked together to keep American food assistance funding at a high level.

President Bush has proposed, in fiscal year 2004, a new \$200 million flexible famine fund, and the Administration has launched an initiative to promote agricultural development, the initiative to end hunger in Africa. Building on that platform of domestic policy initiatives, we have asked our G-8 partners to join with us in a three-part effort to end the cycle of famine.

First of all, we are seeking to ensure that by the G-8 summit meeting in June of this year, the G-8 will have helped the World Food Programme mobilize adequate supplies of food and other necessary assistance to meet the present crisis in Africa.

Second, we are seeking to make the international famine response system more effective, including by improving early warning capabilities, by bringing in additional donors through policies such as twinning, and by ensuring that emergency food assistance is combined with health and agricultural services.

And, third, we are enlisting the help of others, including the multilateral development banks and the U.N. food agencies for efforts to increase the productivity of African farmers, including through improved technology, credit, land tenure and access to markets. We cannot effectively combat famine when vast segments of many populations are afflicted by HIV/AIDS and many farmers are too weak to engage in agriculture.

President Bush's \$15 billion, 5-year initiative to combat international HIV/AIDS is therefore an integral part of the campaign against famine. Weak governance and poor policies are an underlying cause of famine. Zimbabwe's leadership, for example, has pursued policies that discourage agricultural production and even sought to politicize the distribution of food aid.

Improved agricultural policies are a key priority, and lie at the heart of USAID's initiative to end hunger in Africa. The Millennium Challenge Account can also play an important role. President Bush has suggested that one goal of the MCA will be to increase harvests where hunger is greatest.

Finally, freer agricultural trade would advance the cause of food security. Large agricultural subsidies and market access barriers, especially in Europe and Japan, disadvantage farmers in developing countries. Moreover, trade barriers among developing countries themselves sometimes impede the flow of food. Removing these trade distortions would allow food production to take place where it is most efficient and food supplies to flow freely and efficiently to where the need is greatest.

Mr. Chairman, the challenges are very great this year, but so are the opportunities. If we can move forward with the full support of the international community on the initiatives that we are outlining here today, it is within our power to end this cycle of famine in Africa.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Larson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ALAN P. LARSON, UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ECONOMIC, BUSINESS AND AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Chairman Hyde, Ranking Member Lantos, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the threat that food insecurity and famine pose to U.S. national interests, and our response to address these threats.

We welcome your leadership in keeping a focus on this issue in the House of Representatives. We also appreciate the strong leadership of Mr. Wolf, who has brought both passion and policy insight to this issue.

THE FOREIGN POLICY THREAT POSED BY FAMINE

Mr. Chairman, famine is insidious. It does not always capture headlines, like military conflicts or hurricanes. Rather, it creeps over a vulnerable population with an

equally destructive force, stunting the growth of children, greatly weakening—and often killing—adults in their prime, and unraveling decades of development progress.

Moreover, the carnage that famine exacts does not end when sacks of grain and powdered milk are distributed to the hungry. Individuals, communities, governments and the international community are left to deal with the aftermath of the famine's wake, including loss of assets, income and productivity; increases in disease and regional instability; and widespread suffering and death.

Desperate to keep their families and themselves alive for another day, victims of famines take actions they feel necessary to survive. Concerns for sustainable land management and property rights vanish in the face of imminent death. In the worst cases, refugees stream across borders, citizens riot, and governments collapse. Respect for treaties and demarcations are luxuries these people cannot afford. For this reason, we must approach issues of food security—hunger and associated poverty—not only as an urgent humanitarian imperative but also as a serious foreign policy concern that profoundly threatens our interests in a democratic, stable, prosperous, free-trading world. Regrettably, this threat is growing.

The world is currently facing a series of food security crises around the globe, particularly in Afghanistan, Horn of Africa, North Korea and Southern Africa. As a result, current budgets for food aid are reaching their designated limits. Global food aid requirements this year are expected to exceed 12 million metric tons, according to the World Food Program. And this is before we factor in our need to address any humanitarian crisis in Iraq, where the agricultural sector is reeling from years of neglect by the Hussein regime.

Due to reduced harvests worldwide and this surge in demand, the amount of food available for aid has dropped to its lowest level in more than five years, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). They also estimate a decline in global cereal production by more than 3.1% over the last year, which contributes to the difficulty and cost of addressing famine.

U.S. LEADERSHIP: SECOND TO NONE

The United States has a long tradition of providing humanitarian assistance, dating back to 1812 when the Congress passed an “Act of Relief of Citizens of Venezuela.” The first major U.S. food aid operations occurred during and after the First World War. President Eisenhower summed up both the humanitarian and strategic wisdom of providing commodities as assistance when he said, “Food aid can be a powerful instrument for all the world in building a durable peace.”

U.S. food aid programs stand as shining examples of the commitment we have shown to help the needy, regardless of political affiliation or the state of our bilateral relationship. Indeed, the United States is the world's leading provider of food aid to the U.N.'s World Food Program, contributing 51.4% of its budget (about U.S. \$929 million) this past year. Moreover, as President Bush has stated, “we will not use food as a weapon.” Consequently, the United States was the largest supplier of food aid to Afghanistan when the Taliban was in power. We are providing 40,000 metric tons of food aid to North Korea in 2003, and will offer 60,000 metric tons more if the DPRK government agrees to improvements in UN monitoring and increased access to vulnerable populations.

Similarly the United States has led food assistance efforts in the Horn of East Africa. Since July 2002 we have contributed 560,000 metric tons of food aid to Ethiopia and 70,000 metric tons to Eritrea. That brings our share of total contributions to 50 percent to date. We have also recently pledged 200,000 additional metric tons for delivery from the Emerson Trust.

We have no international legal obligation to feed others, but do so because we believe it's the right thing to do—not because we are obligated by treaties or unenforceable statements of rights. But even if charity motivates us, we provide this aid with a clear-eyed view that doing so is very much in our national interest.

FAMINES ARE A PROCESS

Administrator Natsios has often noted “famine is a process.” Unlike a war or natural disaster, which can wreak havoc on an unsuspecting community in a moment's notice, famine situations build over time and can be predicted and prevented. This makes them all the more tragic.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan recently highlighted the multidimensional nature of famine when he warned that “HIV/AIDS, food insecurity and failure of governance comprise a triad of crises leading to unparalleled catastrophe in Africa.” Each of these factors, which on their own so severely afflict individuals and communities, are now combining to form a vicious downward spiral from which few can

escape—a “poverty trap.” HIV/AIDS incapacitates or kills farmers at a time when they should be at their most productive, reducing food availability and often preventing the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next. Lack of food weakens the immune systems of those already ravaged by HIV and increases the likelihood of opportunistic infections. In addition, poor government policies inhibit the growth of vibrant rural sectors and often fail to take appropriate actions to stem the AIDS crisis.

AID TO MEET IMMEDIATE NEEDS

Last year, the Administration saw these forces coming together. Under the leadership of Administrator Natsios, the Administration acted quickly on multiple fronts to lessen their impact. The most immediate need, which Mr. Natsios will describe in detail, was to warn the international community of the dangerous confluence of these factors and to make ready the humanitarian assistance we knew would be needed.

As we have done so consistently in the past, the U.S. Government is stepping up to the plate with substantial humanitarian resources which Administrator Natsios and Deputy Under Secretary Butler will describe in more detail. In addition, President Bush has proposed in the FY2004 budget a new contingency fund, the \$200 million Famine Fund, to improve the ability of the U.S. to respond flexibly to current or imminent famine conditions. Use of the fund will require Presidential approval, and we intend to use it to help leverage increased assistance from other donors.

Administrator Natsios who has done so much to put food security squarely on the foreign policy agenda, has pressed the donor community hard to provide more assistance. Working with him, I have sought to galvanize the G-8 behind an effort to address the immediate crisis and to take more effective international actions to prevent famines in the future.

ENDING FAMINE: A NEW INITIATIVE

We are working with our G-8 partners to increase the supply of food aid to meet the immediate crisis in Africa. At the same time, we are seeking to promote a more proactive approach to ending famine.

Indeed, in February, the United States and France (which holds the G-8 presidency this year) co-chaired a meeting of the top food aid policy officials of the G-8 countries at the UN Headquarters in New York. Administrator Natsios, Ambassador Negroponte and I represented the United States. We were especially honored that UN Secretary General Kofi Annan opened the session with challenging remarks on the importance of ending famine and participated actively in the subsequent discussion, despite his heavy schedule.

ADDRESSING THE IMMEDIATE CRISIS

Working with the World Food Program, we are seeking to get the firmest possible fix on 2003 emergency food aid needs. This WFP analysis will be matched against anticipated contributions to identify the gaps that need to be filled. We are counting on G-8 countries to take the lead in mobilizing the necessary resources. Former Congressman Tony Hall, now our Ambassador to the UN food agencies in Rome, is playing a crucial role in this effort. We aim to have completed this work by the June 1-3 G-8 Summit in Evian.

PREPARATION: EARLY WARNING¹

Even as we address the current crisis, we need to prevent future ones. Our proposal within the G-8 recognizes famine as a process and offers actions to defeat it based on the stage at which it is encountered. The first step is to *prepare* for famines by using advanced early warning systems and improved communication to raise awareness of an impending food crisis and to mobilize support within governments, international organizations and NGOs to respond. We have set up within the G-8 an experts group to better coordinate our famine efforts and to improve the sharing of information. Early warning systems in the Horn of Africa worked well, and early donor response there has saved many thousands of lives.

¹I assume Natsios will focus on efforts to improve donor contributions.

MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF FAMINE

But where we cannot stop the onset of famine conditions, the second step centers on famine *mitigation* and ways to get food or the resources to acquire food to those in need.

The United States already provides an exceptionally high percentage of the world's food aid. We are actively encouraging other donors to increase their food aid donations, and we are open to discussions on ways to protect more fully commercial sales and local agricultural production.

Sadly, many countries that have commodities in surplus are unable to give to the World Food Program (WFP), because they do not have the cash to pay the WFP's required full-cost recovery. Under this system, the donor nation must pay all costs, including administrative and transportation, related to the donation. To free up these commodities and cover the WFP's costs, we have proposed changing WFP procedures to allow "twinning," whereby countries with cash, such as Japan, Singapore or Saudi Arabia, are paired or twinned with countries with commodities, such as Russia, Kazakhstan or Ukraine. Simply put, one country provides the cash, and the other provides the food. We believe this simple concept can go a long way towards providing resources needed to meet crisis needs.

Our mitigation efforts, however, go beyond food aid. We are also proposing more flexible tools to help us better fight the entire array of famines, including those driven by lack of buying power, not the more traditional, lack of supply. In some cases, such as Afghanistan last year, food availability was adequate to meet the populations' needs. Rather, the food crisis was driven by a lack of family financial resources to purchase the food. In such circumstances, excessive injections of external food aid would not increase families' purchasing power but could damage local farm prices and farm income. To meet these demand-driven famines, we have proposed well-targeted cash-for-work programs, which allow governments to use cash to pay people to work, such as in agricultural development activities like planting, irrigation or road construction.

THE LONGER-TERM: INCREASING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

In the long run, the most important step is to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to grow more—whether to feed themselves or to sell in foreign markets.

The starting point is, in the words of Secretary General Annan, to create a second Green Revolution. We must increase agricultural productivity, especially in Africa, to give Africans a chance to leave the poverty that are both a cause and an effect of hunger and malnutrition.

Beginning last year, the Administration began a new effort to fight hunger by increasing agricultural productivity. We show-cased our approach at the March 2002 UN Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, at the June World Food Summit, the G-8 Summit in Kananaskis, and then at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

As Administrator Natsios will describe in more detail, the Initiative to End Hunger in Africa will provide increased funding to raise agricultural production and reduce poverty. The strategy is to empower African farmers in key countries and regions by increasing access to both new technologies and markets. The United States increased its 2003 funding for African agriculture by 25% to support implementation of IEHA. The initiative's goal is to double the production of the basic food crops that make up African diets and increase family incomes.

We are committed to working with and assisting developing countries on a bilateral basis. Yet, the needs are too great for one country to shoulder the burden alone. It is critical that a broad group of stakeholders must work together to build a strong international framework for assisting countries in creating thriving and resilient agricultural sectors.

A FOUNDATION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

While food aid is not conditional on reform, we must seize every opportunity to urge, pressure and help leaders to increase political and economic liberty, to protect property rights of farmers and to maintain policies that support economic growth.

In Ethiopia and Eritrea, some important governance challenges are being met, but many remain. Peace between the two sides is holding. Both sides accepted the independent Boundary Commission's decision on delimitation. Demarcation is expected to start by early summer this year. Differences over the border have not significantly affected emergency food deliveries. Both governments are cooperating with donors and NGO's to distribute aid to the most needy as quickly as possible. The

Ethiopian Government has clearly indicated they welcome biotechnology as a means of increasing agricultural production and preventing future famine. Both governments cooperate with donors in seeking to increase local food production and enhance the early warning systems that have prevented mass starvation so far in this year's drought.

This emphasis on good governance is central to and illustrated by the President's Millennium Challenge Account initiative. The Administration seeks to significantly increase our development investment in countries that rule justly, invest in their people and encourage economic freedom. Countries that qualify for MCA by adopting sound governance and policies may choose to focus the aid on improving agriculture. And as the President made clear when he launched the initiative just over a year ago, this Account may be used, among other things, to "increase harvests where hunger is greatest."

FREER AGRICULTURAL TRADE PROMOTES FOOD SECURITY

Multilateral agricultural trade liberalization is fundamental to the goal of food security. Developing country economies are especially dependent on agricultural. Developed country subsidies to agriculture stymie developing countries—particularly Africa's—agricultural potential by suppressing the world price of commodities. Moreover, these subsidies are very large and badly undercut the impact of what we spend on development assistance. By some estimates, liberalization of trade in agriculture could provide developing countries with at least \$100 billion in new annual income—money desperately needed for infrastructure, education, health care and other social services.

Yet the blame for barriers to agricultural trade does not lie solely at the feet of the developed world. Trade between developing countries is already 40% of developing country trade. By reducing their own barriers to trade in agricultural products, developing countries would raise incomes, increase investment and ensure that food products flow to where the need is greatest.

This is one of the reasons why the United States is pressing so hard for comprehensive liberalization of agricultural trade as part of the WTO's Doha Development trade negotiations. We believe freer trade in agriculture would not only advance U.S. commercial interests, but would also promote economic development of the poorer countries and significantly improve food security.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, food security is a serious foreign policy concern that profoundly threatens human health, economic prosperity and political stability. The Administration is acting quickly and decisively to counter food insecurity, we are pushing forward with new initiatives to address the short-term, medium-term and long-term policy responses. While the challenges are great, the opportunities are great as well; with the concerted efforts of a wide range of partners around the world, we can have a real chance to make famine and chronic food insecurity a thing of the past.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you, Dr. Larson.
Mr. Natsios.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ANDREW S. NATSIOS, ADMINISTRATOR, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. NATSIOS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to testify today before the Committee on the subject that is very important to me and to the agency that I lead.

I have worked in both the public sector and the private sector on famine relief now for 14 years, and I have seen famine up close, where parents have to make decisions on which of their children will live and which will die. They feed the ones that are the healthiest, and they triage the ones that aren't.

Famine terribly disfigures the victims who suffer from it. I have seen mass graves over the years where there is simply not enough people to bury each person who dies from a famine individually, and so they create large pits. I saw actually them being dug and bodies being dumped into them during the North Korea famine,

while I was on one side of the border in China watching a mass burial going on of 28 bodies during the terrible North Korea famine that killed 10 percent of the country, 2½ million people.

In my view the only thing comparable to famine is genocide. And in some ways, they are more horrible because they take so long. People do not die quickly in a famine, they take months to starve to death. So we have made a commitment in the Bush Administration to do all we can to avoid this terrible event from taking place wherever we can.

Frequently though, famines are political in nature. The greatest famines of the 20th century were not caused by weather anomalies. The great Ukrainian famine of the early 1930s in which 13 million Russians and Ukrainians starved to death was orchestrated entirely by Stalin's madness.

The same thing happened in China. Twenty-nine million people died during the great famine, the great leap forward famine of 1958 to 1962, the worst famine in recorded history, was entirely man-made. There was no weather anomalies anywhere in China that year.

What we are facing in Africa now, right now, having gotten past the Southern African drought without large scale loss of life, is two remaining pockets. One is in Zimbabwe, which is a man-made famine. Whether there was a weather problem that could easily have been dealt with given that half of the country was in irrigated agriculture, the destruction of the irrigated agricultural system by the Zimbabwe government, Mr. Mugabe directed this, has been a catastrophe for the country. The country is still severely at risk.

The Mozambican government has been through a terrible civil war in the 1980s and 1990s, in fact has one of the highest growth rates in Africa, and is a model of how a country can come out of a civil war, has in the one pocket a second year of severe drought, where there has been almost 100 percent crop failure. We are watching that very carefully.

We are very concerned about this region of Mozambique, but the Mozambican government not only shows leadership on this but are close allies and partners of ours in fighting the potential for a second year of emergency in Mozambique.

So the two places to watch in Southern Africa are Zimbabwe, Swaziland has got some food insecurity, and then this part of Mozambique. But we are watching that very closely. We contributed over 500,000 tons of food to the Southern Africa drought. As I said before, there was no widespread loss of life in Southern Africa.

In East Africa, we are facing a severe drought in both Eritrea and Ethiopia. You already heard the numbers. But, let me talk about what we did about it. I went in January and I met with the Catholic priest from the Catholic Subcretariat, who was an Ethiopian. And I said, Father, what happened here last year?

And he said, I don't think your government is getting sufficient credit for what you did, but you don't realize it. There would have been mass starvation in Ethiopia last fall if the United States had not quickly released a huge amount of food. There is a food reserve kept by the Ethiopian government through their central ministry, and the agreement is they will not release any food unless a commitment is made by a donor to replenish it. And we made a com-

mitment in September and they released 150,000 tons of food. And he said that stopped the famine last fall in its tracks. If you had not done that we would have been caught. Because no one, including the Ethiopian government, had predicted the severity of what happened with the crop that was supposed to come in in October.

It happened very quickly. The NGOs, the UN, AID and the donors and the Ethiopian government did not have a lot of lead time, which we normally do. We have ramped up our response very rapidly and made a total commitment of 715,000 metric tons of food, which is a huge amount of food aid to Ethiopia, which is about 50 percent of the total pledges that have been made by all donors. In other words, 50 percent comes from the United States, and the rest of the world gives the other 50 percent, which is from Canada, Japan, the European Union, the British, the German government and the Nordics. So we are half of the famine response right now.

Right now about 72 percent of the total requirement for this year, this calendar year in Ethiopia have been met, which means we are—between now and this summer we are out of the danger zone. However, we have got to worry about August, September and October. The next crop will be in.

So far the spring rains look pretty good. We will know in about a month whether or not the rains were sufficient to produce a good crop in October. And depending on whether or not that happens, we will know whether we will have to provide assistance beyond the crop in the fall.

What are the causes of this drought? Eritrea is facing a similar emergency. And we have made a commitment of a hundred thousand tons to Eritrea for its drought. We shouldn't, however, think of famine only in food emergencies only in the context of drought, because there are droughts all over. There was a drought in the United States, the worse drought we have had since the 1930s; we did not have a famine.

It is a combination of poverty, of low household reserves, low capacity to deal with food—with a weather anomaly, such as the one we face in Ethiopia. Ethiopia's per capita income 10 years ago was \$170 per capita, one of the poorest countries in the world. It is now \$107. It is now the poorest country in the world.

Poverty is directly related to vulnerability to famine. Why is that? Because people, when they can't grow enough food, if they have reserves at home, can buy food at the markets, or they can work somewhere else and get food through their work.

Government policies in Ethiopia and Eritrea do not encourage trade and production. It is not a malicious policy. The government of Ethiopia is actually doing an excellent job in responding to this emergency, and I want to compliment Prime Minister Meles. He rang the alarm bells very early on as opposed to what happened under the Diarge, when they hid the famine, which is why all of those people died in 1985.

So Prime Minister Meles, I met with him in January. We talked about the reforms from our perspective are necessary to ensure this does not happen again. Ethiopia faced a famine in 1999. About 50,000 people died in it. It was caught before it got completely out of control.

But now what we are facing is a cycle where Ethiopia has a drought and another famine before it has recovered from the last one. In fact, this emergency is directly a result of a failure to recover from the last emergency in 1999.

And I notice very great scholar of famine, Mesfin Wolde Mariam, whose book on famine is one of the classic works in the late 20th century, last quarter of the 20th century. I have read his book a couple of times, I use it when I teach in the subject, and I am very honored that he is here today to join us.

He is one of the preeminent authorities in Ethiopian famine in the world. But if you look at his book, he traces famine from the late 1950s until he wrote the book, I think in the early 1970s, if I recall correctly. And if you look at the pattern, the famines come closer and closer to each other. Now they are coming 2 or 3 years in a row. We can't have that in the future and respond to it. So what has to happen?

First is Ethiopia does not have a liberalized capital account, which means that they don't have a currency that is easily exchangeable to facilitate trade. Two years ago, Ethiopian farmers were producing a surplus in certain areas of the country, they wanted to export that and they couldn't, both because of poor infrastructure, but also because it is very difficult to trade because they don't have a liberalized currency.

The effect of that was to collapse prices. Prices were at 10 percent of the normal level. And farmers lost money after they had bought seed and fertilizer to invest to produce this surplus. So what they said is we are not doing this again, we are going bankrupt, we are in debt now because we produced this food. It couldn't be exported and the price has collapsed. So it is a terrible incentive to farmers, a message to farmers, that if you produce a surplus and you can't sell it, the price collapses, why do it the next year.

So farmers pulled back and did not invest in producing a surplus in those areas. All of Ethiopia did not face a drought. The Amharic Highlands in the center of the country and the western part of the country had enough rains. It is in the south and the eastern part of the country that the severity of the crisis was. If the other areas had produced a surplus they could have moved that into the deficit areas. But infrastructure is a problem, and a liberalized trade account and banking reform that will bring capital, private capital in from other countries through the international banking system.

Also, there has been an underinvestment in agricultural development. We have put a heavy emphasis in AID on agricultural development. We have increased our budget in African agriculture by 50 percent under an initiative that the President and Secretary Powell have launched to end famine in Africa through agriculture. We have gone from 113 million when we started in fiscal 2001, to 167 million. What did I say, thousand? 113 million spent in 2001, to 167 million we are spending this year. So it is a \$50 million increase, almost 50 percent in 2 years. That is not enough, however. And I might add, there does not appear to be a large constituency in this city for agriculture.

We have to fight every step of the way to get more money. We put the money in the budget, and then it is spent in other sectors that are regarded as more popular.

So unless we invest in agricultural development, in new seed varieties, in better use of natural resources, in more science applied to agriculture and finally more irrigation and water catchment areas and water management, we are not going to be able to deal with this problem in Ethiopia.

And if we do that, though, we can break the cycle of drought and famine, not just in Ethiopia, in other areas, and produce the green revolution that Alan Larson just mentioned, which is our goal over the longer term.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Natsios follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ANDREW S. NATSIOS, ADMINISTRATOR,
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chairman Hyde, Members of the Committee: It is an honor to be here today to discuss the status of worldwide food security, the role of U.S. food aid programs, and the increasingly difficult issues that the United States and the international community face trying to meet the humanitarian food needs of people around the world.

FAMINE

Persistent hunger continues to be one of the most significant global development challenges we face today. More than 800 million people, three-quarters of whom live in rural areas, are seriously malnourished. Most hungry people live in sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia, although there are groups in all regions that are vulnerable to under-nutrition, either continuously or during specific seasons. Most of the hungry are farmers, but they are unable to produce adequate food and income to ensure their families' well being. Under constant stress from poverty, malnutrition, and disease, these vulnerable people can be pushed over the edge to famine by drought, unwise government policies, or conflict.

Today, we are confronted with concurrent food crises in Afghanistan, southern Africa, the Horn of Africa, and North Korea. We are also witnessing, for the first time, a convergence of what "The Economist" magazine calls the double curse of HIV/AIDS and food insecurity. In these difficult times, the international community must act now to meet critical food needs around the world. But that is not enough. We must also address the causes of food insecurity, or we cannot prevent famines in the future.

At the World Food Summit in 2002, the United States committed with other donors to cutting hunger in half by 2015. That commitment means addressing access to food, availability of food, and improvements in agricultural productivity; it means ending famine, and improving nutrition. In order to make progress in this effort, we need to deepen our understanding of food insecurity and famine. Fortunately, we continue to learn lessons from our experiences using food and non-food resources in complex food insecurity problems.

One of the most important lessons that we have learned is that food aid and humanitarian assistance alone will not prevent these crises from re-occurring, even in the short term.

Famine is an economic crisis in which large numbers of people experience starvation and associated mortality. Most famine scholars and practitioners would agree that the understanding of famine and its complexity has grown enormously over the past half century. This research tells us that famine is a process, not an event. It is a process that provides us with early indicators (i.e., pre-famine indicators) of its onset. Despite this research, too many people attribute famine to drought conditions, when the reality is much more complex. We now recognize that regressive agricultural policies, failed markets, and destructive conflict drive famine more than drought alone. These characteristics of fragile, failed, and failing states, particularly when combined with a drought and high rates of HIV/AIDS, are the conditions that allow famines to occur. Only by addressing the root causes of these failures with the appropriate tools can the international community expect to prevent famines from occurring.

Because multiple crises occur simultaneously, the task of accurately identifying and addressing the root causes of famine is far more complex today than when drought was thought to be 'the only' famine problem. Furthermore, the potential

costs of responding with the wrong tools, at the wrong time can be terrible, particularly given the cost of 'last resort' interventions such as airdrops of food aid.

As the President's Coordinator for International Disaster Assistance, I have visited famine-prone situations throughout the world and have watched vulnerable people cope with multiple famine threats. I am convinced that the best way to provide assistance to vulnerable families is to provide relief that also contains the seeds of their recovery.

When we see early indicators that may lead to famine, we need to intervene in ways to support the economic structures on which vulnerable families' survival depends. We are most familiar with using food aid to respond to situations approaching a famine. In many cases, this is the correct response, particularly in the short term. In other famine conditions, however, the total availability of food is not the primary issue. Where sufficient food is *available* for the local population—yet widespread food insecurity and hunger exists—we need a broader range of non-food famine prevention tools that can effectively address those factors that limit *access* to and *utilization* of those food resources.

Ethiopia's present food crisis is an example of a supply-driven famine. The country does not produce nearly enough food to feed its people, and it lacks the economic reserves to import sufficient food to fill the gap. In situations such as this, food aid, and more specifically imported food aid, is the appropriate short-term response.

Food aid alone, however, is clearly not the long-term solution for Ethiopia. The crisis in Ethiopia today is just the most recent in a series of food security crises that have devastated the country over the last twenty years.

The United States will provide more than \$300 million worth of food aid this fiscal year. During the same period, we will provide \$4 million of agricultural development assistance. While the Ethiopian government has taken a leadership role in responding to the famine, it has been reluctant until very recently to embrace the policies that will stimulate growth and investment in its agricultural sector to avoid future famines.

Unless the donor community invests in recovery and prevention initiatives while promoting good government policies, these periodic shocks will continue and so will the associated costs in lives and resources. The donor community must allocate more resources toward famine prevention activities such as those in the agricultural sector. At the same time, unless the Government of Ethiopia embraces accountable and open governance and enacts market and trade reforms necessary to increase the capacity of local producers, Ethiopia will remain in a chronic state of hunger. It is critical that we all do our part to put the systems and policies in place that will prevent the next food security crisis in Ethiopia from occurring.

In Afghanistan during 2002, the international community was faced with essentially a demand-driven famine. The countries surrounding Afghanistan had plenty of surplus food available, thus ensuring price stability, to meet the needs of the Afghan people. Unfortunately, approximately eight million people in Afghanistan did not have the purchasing power necessary to buy enough food. In this case, the United States and the international community both responded primarily with imported food aid. However, the tools did not exist for the U.S. Government to respond more effectively and, possibly, at lower cost to the taxpayer. Donors recognized that a more effective response in some cases would have been to create employment-generating opportunities that would have put cash, rather than food aid, into the hands of the poorest people who are most vulnerable in any famine. Cash would have allowed the people to meet their food needs and simultaneously stimulate markets and trade, thereby further promoting agricultural and economic development.

It is not just the humanitarian and developmental community that recognizes the importance of employment and income-generating initiatives in promoting market and trade development. Gary Martin, the President and CEO of the North American Export Grain Association, recently said in a speech to the Capitol Hill Forum, "...that the best, most sustainable way to stimulate the growth of U.S. farm exports is to provide for income growth in developing countries."

The Southern Africa food crisis is the result of a major drought complicated by disastrous government policies in Zimbabwe. First, the Government of Zimbabwe implemented price controls for staples, such as corn, which inhibit production and trade. Second, it has backtracked on the liberalization of grain marketing, bringing corn back under the control of the grain marketing parastatal and creating a monopoly that prohibits open commercial trade. Third, the government's irresponsible expropriation of land from commercial farmers has decimated the most productive part of Zimbabwe's agricultural sector. As a result of these political actions on the part of the government, Zimbabwe has lost its position as a net exporter of grain.

Early reports do suggest that this year's maize crop in Zimbabwe may be slightly better in the northern parts of the country due to improved weather. Notwith-

standing this improvement, however, this will still be far below the five-year average production for maize of 1.8 million metric tons (MT) due, not only to erratic rainfall, but also to flawed government policies.

Crop assessments in other parts of southern Africa report marginal improvements for Zambia, though not significant enough to prevent a third year of serious food insecurity, particularly in southern areas of the country. In Malawi, increased crop production due to better weather conditions will help to improve the overall food security situation. The Famine Early Warning System, or FEWS, has issued a food security alert for Mozambique, stating that, "A serious deterioration in the food security status of vulnerable populations in southern and central Mozambique is occurring and is expected to worsen over the next twelve months. A near-total crop failure in some zones, following a poor harvest last year, has been the primary cause of the current situation."

Southern Africa is also struggling with high rates of HIV/AIDS which have exacerbated the effects of the political errors of the regional governments. With the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world, Southern Africa has 28.1 million people living with the disease. In many cases, the disease is killing the most productive members of society, most notably in the agricultural sector. The economic impact is massive as investments are depleted and human resources are lost. HIV/AIDS is causing the collapse of social safety nets for families and communities, thus undermining the ability of both to weather economic downturns.

Efforts to promote an economic recovery in southern Africa must focus on addressing the economic and market policies that have tied the hands of the private sector while simultaneously providing critical assistance to vulnerable groups, in particular those infected with HIV/AIDS. The donor community, in this case, plays only a supporting role in the recovery of southern Africa, as the critical initiatives and actions related to economic reform must be driven by the governments of the region.

RESPONSE

The problem of hunger in Africa is large and getting worse. The impact that this has on the prospects for current and future generations of African children, women and men is devastating, and highlights agriculture's contribution to reducing hunger and the consequences if we do not succeed.

Projections from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the Food and Agriculture Organization, and the United Nations indicate that hunger in Africa will increase, given current trends of economic performance, agricultural growth, conflict and limitations of existing policy. At present, one third of the entire population of sub-Saharan Africa falls below the poverty line and goes to bed hungry each night. By 2011, an estimated 50 percent of the world's hungry will reside in sub-Saharan Africa. We cannot wait until then to take action.

In Africa, meeting the Millennium Development Goal of cutting hunger in half means reducing the estimated number of hungry from 206 million as of 2000, to approximately 103 million people by 2015. This is achievable, if progress can be made to accelerate agricultural growth, improve health and education, and reduce conflict.

If the conditions are created for agricultural growth to accelerate, the prospects for rural households in Africa are very promising. Per capita incomes can triple. Recent analysis by the IFPRI indicates that it is possible to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of cutting hunger in half. Specifically, the analysis shows that it is possible to make significant improvement in the incomes of the rural majority in Africa.

Investing in an integrated agenda to increase agricultural growth and rural incomes not only reduces the number of hungry, it can also reduce and save emergency food aid costs significantly. By 2015, at current projections, it is estimated that emergency food aid costs worldwide will be approximately \$4.6 billion per year. Fostering agricultural recovery in famine-prone countries can create substantial savings in future emergency assistance. If we invest now and increase agricultural growth and rural incomes, it is estimated that food aid costs will drop to approximately \$2 billion per year. This is a net reduction of over \$2.5 billion per year.

While agriculture alone is not sufficient to end hunger or eliminate famines, hunger cannot be reduced or ended nor famines mitigated or prevented without agriculture playing a large and driving role in the development effort. In agriculture-dominated economies, including many African economies, agriculture accounts for greater than 40 percent of the impact (more than any other sector) on efforts to reduce hunger. Recent studies have shown that a 1 percent increase in agricultural productivity could reduce poverty by six million people in Africa.

If agricultural sector and rural incomes do not grow, however, the future prospects are bleak; rural households could be poorer in 2015 than they were in 1997.

A NEW AGRICULTURE

Over the next five years, USAID is renewing its leadership in agricultural development assistance. This new agricultural strategy reflects adaptation to major emerging opportunities, including:

- Accelerating agriculture science-based solutions, especially using biotechnology, to reduce poverty and hunger;
- Developing global and domestic trade opportunities for farmers and rural industries, in particular by strengthening rural markets and increasing incentives to produce;
- Extending training for developing world scientists and agricultural extension services to third world farmers; and
- Promoting sustainable agriculture and sound natural resources management.

These new agricultural initiatives provide the framework for our future activities. Under each initiative, the Agency proposes to launch a set of activities that broadly signal a shift in USAID leadership in this sector and may leverage new commitments and funding from others.

Equally important, agricultural development is now seen as part, not the whole, of the solution. Investments in infrastructure, health, and education both reinforce and are made more viable by investments in agricultural growth.

U.S. COMMITMENT TO REDUCING HUNGER

Mr. Chairman, the United States retains its strong commitment to reducing hunger around the world. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, an Administration initiative to End Hunger in Africa was announced. This 15-year initiative is committed to the concerns of agricultural growth and building an Africa-led partnership to cut hunger and poverty. The primary objective of the initiative is to rapidly and sustainably increase agricultural growth and rural incomes in sub-Saharan Africa.

Congressional support for agriculture has also been strong. In FY 2000, Congress passed revised Title XII legislation restating the United States' commitment to the goal of preventing famine and freeing the world from hunger. This legislation provided USAID with a new and more positive legislative framework that supports the emergence of a "new agriculture" in developing and transition economies.

GLOBAL FOOD AID NEEDS AND AVAILABILITY

The U.S. Government will be taking the steps I have just described to help address the long-term causes of food insecurity and famine. For the foreseeable future, however, significant levels of food aid will still be needed to provide an international safety-net for the world's food insecure. As I mentioned previously, the world is currently faced with a series of large-scale food security crises. These crises have pushed international food aid requirements to their highest level ever. Global food aid availability, however, has dropped to its lowest level in more than five years. According to some estimates, global food aid requirements will exceed more than 12 million metric tons in calendar year 2003—over 3.0 million tons more than the past global average. Needs in sub-Saharan Africa alone are expected to exceed 5.0 million metric tons.

Global food aid availability has been seriously reduced by a number of coincidental factors. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, global cereal production declined more than 3.1 percent in 2002 when compared to 2001. More alarmingly, global cereal production was more than 80 million metric tons below consumption requirements.

In other words Mr. Chairman, the world consumed more grain than it produced last year.

Only through the availability of carryover stocks, primarily in developed countries, is the world avoiding a global food shortage. Because of the reduced global grain production, prices rose significantly for most major grains. Early in 2003, U.S. wheat and corn prices, for example, rose more than 39 percent and 25 percent, respectively, although some commodity prices have begun to decline. All of these factors, when combined with declining donor food aid contributions, are expected to reduce global food aid levels to no more than 8 million tons this year. With needs approaching 12 million tons and estimated food aid contributions providing perhaps

8.0 million tons, a food aid shortfall of more than 4.0 million tons is expected—the annual food requirement of approximately 20 million people.

U.S. COMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONAL FOOD AID

Mr. Chairman, the commitment of the United States to use its agricultural abundance to help the less fortunate around the world is stronger today than ever. President Bush mentioned U.S. food aid programs during his State of the Union address on January 28th of this year when he noted with pride that, “Across the earth, America is feeding the hungry; more than 60 percent of international food aid comes as a gift from the people of the United States.” The President’s comment was based upon the percentage of U.S. contributions to the World Food Program (WFP) in 2002.

Congressional support for U.S. food assistance programs also continues to be very broad and bipartisan. The Consolidated Appropriations Resolution for 2003, which was signed by the President on February 20, provides \$1.44 billion for P.L.480 Title II activities. This level of funding will again position the United States to be the largest, most responsive food aid donor in the world.

U.S. FOOD AID PROGRAMS

Mr. Chairman, the United States has a number of food aid programs that it uses to meet a variety of food, market development, and food aid requirements. These programs, which include P.L. 480 Titles I, II, and III, Section 416(b) of the Agricultural Act of 1949, the Food for Progress program, and the McGovern/Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE) are administered either by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Title I, Section 416(b), Food for Progress, and FFE) or by USAID (Titles II and III). These programs are projected to provide a combined total of more than 4.0 million metric tons of international food aid in FY 2003.

The largest of the U.S. food aid programs, and the program that exclusively addresses the nutritional needs of vulnerable groups, is the P.L.480 Title II program (“Title II”). The Title II program is administered by USAID’s Office of Food for Peace and is the flagship of U.S. humanitarian food aid efforts overseas. On average, the Title II program has provided more than 2.0 million tons of U.S. agricultural commodities per year, with a value of more than \$850 million. With the \$1.44 billion that the President has just approved for Title II, we estimate that the program will provide in excess of 3.0 million metric tons this year.

During FY 2002, the Title II program supported activities in approximately 45 different countries, in partnership with international organizations like the World Food Program (WFP) and the leading nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) like CARE, Catholic Relief Services, and World Vision. These types of activities bring direct assistance to more than 61 million people annually in both non-emergency and emergency response activities.

In addition to our appropriated food aid resources, the United States continues to maintain the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust. The Emerson Trust is a critical humanitarian reserve that remains available to meet urgent and extraordinary food needs. It is my hope that other donors, both traditional and new, will do their fair share to meet the needs of the world’s most vulnerable people and thus obviate the need for the United States to draw from the Emerson Trust.

At the urging of the United States, in an effort to address famine and food security issues including current crises and prevention of future crises, a Contact Group of G-8 officials met informally in New York on March 5. The Contact Group discussed these issues with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, WFP, FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. This meeting provided a forum for the WFP to again share with the donor community the fact that there is a 4.0 million metric ton shortfall in food aid availability.

EAST AFRICA

In the fall of 2002, the Government of Ethiopia issued its first appeal for a looming crisis that could affect as many as 15 million people under a worst-case scenario. As a result of low and erratic rainfall during both the major and minor rainy seasons in 2002, Ethiopia was faced with an anticipated food deficit of more than 2.3 million tons. The drought, which followed just two years after another serious drought, exhausted the coping mechanisms of millions of pastoralists and subsistence farmers, making them completely dependent upon international food assistance for their survival.

Since the first Government of Ethiopia appeal, the United States, through USAID’s Office of Food for Peace, has pledged more than 715,000 metric tons (MTs)

of food aid to the people of Ethiopia with a value of approximately \$320 million. This assistance totals approximately forty percent of the 2002/2003 food aid requirement in the country.

Unfortunately, Ethiopia will face renewed food shortages beginning in July, unless the international community provides further, significant contributions of food.

A near total crop failure in Eritrea has led to shortfalls there of 280,000–350,000 metric tons. Thus far, USAID has committed to supplying 69,000 of that need, and another 38,000 MTs are planned. Together, they will raise the total U.S. contribution to Eritrea to \$47 million. USAID is also providing 4,000 MTs of food assistance to refugees from neighboring countries now living in Djibouti.

CONCLUSION: GAPS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Mr. Chairman, as I have just reported, global food insecurity is complex and dynamic. There is no standard recipe of assistance that will solve all of the country or regional crises that I briefly described above. Each food security crisis must be addressed based upon the unique causes of that particular situation. The international community must develop a set of tools that are flexible enough to address the unique causes of each particular crisis. Those tools, together with the recipient government's attention to good governance and sound policies, will enable the global community to provide truly effective assistance.

The U.S. food aid programs that I described above are clearly the most effective in the world. This Administration, from the President and the Secretary of State down through the foreign affairs agencies, however, recognizes that food aid programs are just one tool among many that are necessary to address the complex needs of the least developed countries in the world. To meet these complex needs, the President has proposed a number of new initiatives that will give the United States the capacity to assist in both the prevention and mitigation of food security crises around the world. Let me briefly describe each initiative:

In his 2004 budget, the President has announced a new humanitarian Famine Fund. The President's Famine Fund is a \$200 million contingency fund for dire, unforeseen circumstances related to famine. Use of the fund will be subject to a Presidential decision and will be disbursed by USAID, modeled after the International Disaster Assistance funds to ensure timely, flexible, and effective utilization.

The Famine Fund is intended to support activities for which other funding is either not available or not appropriate. It will increase the flexibility of the United States to anticipate and respond to the root causes of famine. Potential uses might include:

- Leveraging non-traditional donor contributions through "twinning."
- Supporting cash initiatives where "access" to food, rather than "availability" of food, is the barrier to food security.
- Supporting initiatives that leverage broader donor support for famine prevention.

The President's FY 2003 supplemental and FY 2004 budget request includes funding for a new U.S. Emergency Fund for Complex Foreign Crises (\$150 million in the FY 2003 supplemental, \$100 million in the FY 2004 budget). These proposals will assist the President to quickly and effectively respond to or prevent unforeseen complex foreign crises by providing resources that can be drawn upon at the onset of a crisis. This proposal will fund a range of foreign assistance activities, including support for peace and humanitarian intervention operations to prevent or respond to foreign territorial disputes, armed ethnic and civil conflicts that pose threats to regional and international peace, and acts of ethnic cleansing, mass killing or genocide. Use of the Fund will require a determination by the President that a complex emergency exists and that it is in the national interest to furnish assistance in response, similar to the Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA) Fund.

Mr. Chairman, there are clear limits to what U.S. assistance can do to promote peace, stimulate development, and prevent and mitigate crises. Without the combined efforts of the donor community and, more importantly, the recipient governments themselves, progress will be limited. By combining our established tools, like our outstanding food assistance and disaster assistance programs, with new initiatives designed to focus on prevention and mitigation activities in least developed countries, we can significantly increase the possibility of either preventing a crisis from developing or, at least, reduce the severity of a crisis that does develop.

I urge Congress to support these critical new initiatives that have been proposed by the President.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I would be pleased to answer any of your or the Committee's questions.

The President's Initiative to End Hunger in Africa

Formally launched at a workshop held August 29, 2002, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, the Agricultural Initiative to End Hunger in Africa originated in the global recognition that hunger in Africa is one of the most significant development challenges facing the world today.

USAID's commitment to implementing the initiative rests on the recognition that clear political and technical options for reversing the trends of hunger and poverty in Africa now exist. The initiative recognizes that success requires sustained investments in agriculture-based strategies, programs and policies, in conjunction with



improvements in health, education, infrastructure, environment and public policy management.

The initiative calls for a partnership with African leaders and governments to work and invest in a smallholder-oriented agricultural growth strategy.

Since significant domestic and foreign investment from the private sector is also

necessary, the conditions to attract and support private investment need to be established and maintained.

THE HUNGER CHALLENGE

The problem of hunger in Africa is widespread and getting worse. The numbers are staggering. It is estimated that one in three people in Africa are currently undernourished and that a third of all the world's undernourished people reside in sub-Saharan Africa. According to a USDA study, by 2010 Africa may account for nearly two-thirds of the undernourished people in the world.

Widespread poverty compounds the problem of hunger in Africa. Low per capita agricultural income is directly linked to high rates of poverty and hunger in Africa, forming a vicious, recurring cycle that leads to a low-growth trap: poverty limits people's ability to purchase food, while malnutrition and poor health limit their ability to earn income, leading to still deeper poverty.

At the same time, the spread of major infectious diseases like malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, resulting in extraordinarily high death rates, also drains labor from rural economic activities. The total costs in human suffering, lowered economic productivity, and lost intellectual resources to rural Africa can scarcely be overstated.

Reducing hunger and poverty in Africa is of key strategic importance to Africa and the United States. This country has strong political, economic and human-

itarian interests in supporting higher agricultural growth in Africa. Without such growth, widespread hunger and poverty will increase the likelihood of political instability and costly conflict across the continent. U.S. exports to Africa are already substantial, totaling \$6.1 billion in 1996 alone and creating an estimated 100,000 American jobs, but an expanding African agricultural sector and greater African economic growth means expanding markets for U.S. exports and even more American jobs.

AN AGRICULTURAL ACTION PLAN

The Agricultural Initiative to End Hunger in Africa focuses on promoting agricultural growth and building an African-led partnership to cut hunger and poverty. The primary objective of the initiative is *to rapidly and sustainably increase agricultural growth and rural incomes in sub-Saharan Africa.*

To grow out of poverty, smallholder farmers and agricultural firms need to generate profits and income from their products and services. Elements of an action plan to tackle the problem of hunger in Africa therefore include:

- Create a coordinated subregional/multi-country momentum and dynamic to induce and encourage agricultural growth.
- Support the efforts of countries and leaders committed to agricultural growth as a critical development pathway.
- Identify and target options and opportunities to accelerate smallholder-based agricultural growth, leading to more efficient and profitable use of resources.

- Forge effective linkages with other sectors and initiatives, including education, health, macroeconomic reform and infrastructure improvement, to achieve common economic and social development objectives.



- Build alliances and a broad-based political and financial commitment among public and private development partners, both in Africa and internationally, to cut hunger in half by 2015.

A regional vision is crucial. Regional cooperation and harmonization of agricultural trade systems will play a critical role in creating national, regional and international opportunities for farmers and firms. Regional portfolios to promote agricultural growth will focus on agricultural trade, technology development/transfer, and information systems that help countries identify and take advantage of opportunities, promote spillover of benefits, and avert disasters.

African leadership is likewise indispensable if progress is to be sustained. In particular, African leaders need to put agriculture at the center of programs targeting economic growth and poverty reduction. Experience demonstrates that where African leaders are committed to agricultural growth, donors partner with them and achieve significant results.

The initiative's agricultural investments must be focused, not scattershot; therefore, tough choices on the allocation of efforts and resources must be made. We have used two key criteria. First, we are targeting investments that are *important for African smallholders and firms*, using recent hard-won lessons to identify the likeliest enabling conditions for success as well as interventions that offer proven sustainable benefits to these two groups. Second, we are targeting investments that are *appropriate for USAID* and that complement the activities of the private sector, African governments and other donors.

Multisector approaches to reduction of malnutrition and poverty are essential, involving the promotion of better public health, education, and clean water, as well as increased food supplies and non-farm sources of income. Integration of HIV/AIDS education, health care, and family assistance into agricultural projects and rural investments can all nurture rural livelihoods and agricultural growth.

Finally, to achieve the initiative's goals, substantial investment will be needed. African governments, international development agencies, private sector investors, civil society, universities, and a broad range of interest groups that

provide support for African development, including USAID, must work together to mobilize the necessary resources.

FOCUS COUNTRIES AND INVESTMENTS

The concept of focusing used here has three important dimensions for achieving agricultural growth and the success of this initiative.

- **Focus countries** display promising conditions and opportunities for achieving agricultural growth.
- **Focus subregional strategies and programs** are those that are likeliest to create the conditions for spillover of innovations and spread of benefits across countries.
- **Focus goods and services** offer the greatest potential for raising rural incomes through agricultural production and off-farm enterprise development.



The approach will concentrate on focus countries in each of three subregions—i.e., Eastern, West/Central, and Southern Africa.

A subregional platform to complement country-level efforts will be vital to

accelerating agricultural growth. Of particular importance is the fact that it will spread the benefits of the agricultural initiative beyond the focus countries. Therefore, both the nine focus countries and the appropriate USAID subregional units (REDSO, WARP and RCSA) will prepare individual five-year action plans. In preparing their plans, the focus countries in each subregion will work closely with each other, with their subregional unity, and with AFR/SD and EGAT for maximum coordination and synergy.

The initiative will encourage a focus on crops, livestock and environmental goods and services where African farmers and firms have a comparative and competitive advantage. Emphasis will be placed on supporting the development of a basket of goods and services relevant to global, regional and national markets. This includes traditional and nontraditional export and food commodities that (a) have the potential to raise incomes and attract private investment and (b) lend themselves to smallholder production and technical innovation.

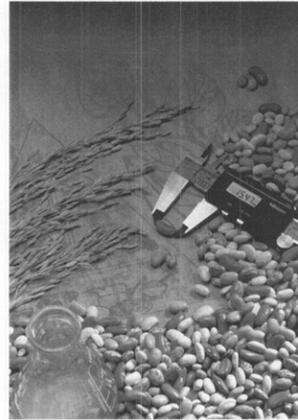
A FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE USAID AGRICULTURAL GROWTH INVESTMENTS IN AFRICA

Evidence from Africa and throughout the world demonstrates that few regions can emerge from poverty without sustained agricultural growth, and that sustainable agricultural growth requires a continuous flow of innovations that increase productivity. Increased agricultural productivity and more competitive markets are essential ingredients of smallholder agricultural growth, and both offer numerous

opportunities for high-impact USAID investments.

Country and subregional action plans will be built around six focal themes for maximum coordinated impact:

Scientific and technological applications that harness the power of new technology (e.g., information technology and biotechnology) and global markets contribute to agricultural growth. Science and technology can help



bring more nutritious, higher yielding and stress resistant varieties of key staples to African farmers, can help reduce seasonable risks faced by small farmers, and help raise household incomes, improve food security and provide a buffer against famine.

USAID is committed to doubling investment in developing and disseminating technologies appropriate to African agriculture, by expanding programs to improve farmer's crop management and use of natural resources and increasing research on new strains of traditional African staple

crops. The Initiative will help shape the next generation of African agricultural leaders and scientists, by increasing investment in training programs, improving the linkages between U.S. and African researchers and research institutions, and providing access to the tools of modern biotechnology through the Collaborative Agricultural Biotechnology (CABIO) initiative. Finally, USAID will support efforts to improve the micronutrient content of basic African foods by expanding research, development and dissemination of enhanced varieties of maize, beans and sweet potatoes.

Improving the efficiency of **agricultural trade and market systems** contributes to agricultural growth by raising African competitiveness in export and domestic markets, connecting African farmers to consumers, and integrating African countries into global markets. More effective market systems will add value to products and processes, deliver high-quality, safe products, and reduce costs for consumers. Furthermore, they will



create a climate and infrastructure that attract private and foreign investment to Africa agricultural businesses.

Community- and producer-based organizations contribute to agricultural growth by providing a wide variety of business, training and leadership development services and by giving a

political voice to the economic interests of farmers, who are normally too poor and too scattered to be heard. Such organizations can also create basic linkages between farmers (especially small-scale farmers) and businesses (input vendors, food processors, manufacturers, traders and food outlets) or research groups that are unable or unwilling to deal with them individually. These linkages create opportunities and add value to producer efforts while offering businesses an efficient means of reaching producers.

Developing human capital, infrastructure and institutions is a fundamental building block of agricultural growth. It is vital to build Africa's human and institutional capacity to shape and lead policy and research, as well as provide agricultural education. Furthermore, over the past decade there has been significant policy reform, but limited institutional reform. Many institutions created during central government control of markets and services now find themselves ill-equipped to work in a liberalized market environment and in need of restructuring. Finally, the need to develop Africa's infrastructure—in transportation, energy, water/sanitation and telecommunications—is increasingly urgent.

Another essential element in Africa's agricultural growth must be **integrating vulnerable groups and countries in transition** into sustainable development processes. This effort recognizes that hunger and poverty are not immutable issues, but are often human-made problems to which human-made solutions in many cases already exist. Specific objectives include: (a) helping

the chronically poor and hungry in rural Africa find viable paths out of poverty by accumulating assets, (b) reducing the vulnerability of poor people to weather-, market- and conflict-induced shocks, and (c) enhancing the capacity of countries to manage shocks that have regional and national impacts.

Finally, **environmental management** contributes to agricultural and rural sector growth through the conservation and production of environmental goods and services that generate public and private economic benefits. Proper environmental management makes agricultural production and water management sustainable and reduces or reverses degradation caused by inappropriate farming practices, overgrazing and poor forest management.

OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR 2002 AND 2003

“Quick Start” activities have already begun to lay the foundation for the initiative’s launch in 2003. These activities emphasize (a) training in agricultural science and policy and (b) wide dissemination of agricultural technology packages, including biotechnology, especially through the new TARGET program.

Initial efforts will concentrate on **a key country in each of three regions: Uganda** in East and Central Africa, **Mozambique** in Southern Africa, and **Mali** in West and Central Africa. These countries are leaders in policy reform, public investment, and government

commitment to agricultural growth and poverty reduction. They are representative of the key economic and agricultural characteristics of their regions. These countries also have the greatest potential for rapidly influencing regional agricultural productivity and economic growth through trade and technology diffusion. The Initiative will be expanded in the future to include a total of nine countries.

The process of consulting with focus countries, the development community, and private investors has been underway since last year. It will continue with the firming of commitments and the weaving of strategies, programs and alliances with input and feedback from all these stakeholders.

Monitoring and evaluation commenced with the Quick Start activities and will continue throughout the life of the initiative. The process of elaborating sample indicators for the initiative is already well advanced, and planning will coordinate timing and content of projects to make it possible to learn from comparisons between both focus countries and subregions.

Strategic analysis to guide strategies, workplans and monitoring has also begun, and the focus countries and subregional units will start crafting their workplans in the next few months. A new funding mechanism will permit them to add dedicated staff to help realize the vision—ambitious, yet eminently realizable—of this initiative.



Chairman HYDE. Thank you, Mr. Natsios.
Dr. Butler.

STATEMENT OF JAMES G. "JIM" BUTLER, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY FOR FARM AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICES, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Mr. BUTLER. Thank you, and good morning, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to join all of you dedicated to assisting hungry people worldwide.

There is no mission more worthy or more challenging. The United States Department of Agriculture is a full partner with the U.S. Agency for International Development in delivering food aid programs that utilize U.S. Agricultural products to relieve famine.

My testimony submitted for the record highlights five areas. First, it notes how the administration of title I of Public Law 480 by the Foreign Agricultural Service dovetails with AID's administration of title II of the act.

Second, it describes the unfortunate circumstance of lower U.S. Productions this year of the major commodities traditionally used in our food aid programs.

Third, the testimony reviews food aid programs run by Foreign Agricultural Service and cites examples of their use in East Africa this past year.

Fourth, it details exciting results from pilot projects under the Global Food for Education Program.

Finally, per instructions of your letter, my testimony comments about agriculture development strategy in East Africa. Given the magnitude of the problem we face with our efforts to alleviate hunger, it is essential that all U.S. Government agencies, the World Food Programme, the private volunteer organizations work hand in hand to make the best use of our limited resources.

For the most part we have done a good job. Now comes the harder part. We must also leverage our experiences and influence to encourage other nations to share more fully in providing both food assistance and technical assistance to food in insecure countries.

I emphasize technology here. It will become a self-help tool to supplement the food aid that I think we all agree will be necessary for a long-term commitment. At the same time, the proper technology helps people to help themselves. It is a major tool to extend our food aid resources to their maximum. That is why it is so alarming to see biotechnology, a highly-charged political food aid issue. The issue for food aid intensified last summer when our ability to deliver desperately needed food to African nations was greatly hindered by individuals and organizations opposed to biotechnology who made misguided statements about the U.S. Food system.

There was dissemination of grossly erroneous information and scare tactics employed. That was absolutely shameful that it kept much of the needed safe American food from reaching those who were most in need.

We must address the many ungrounded unscientific concerns about products produced in biotechnology. The U.S. Regulatory process for transgenic crops is well coordinated among the Federal

regulatory agencies that set standards for human, animal and plant health and environmental safety.

The commodities we ship overseas commercially and for food aid are the same products sold and consumed here at home. We have been working to assure food aid recipients and our partners in the food aid community that the U.S. Food is safe and wholesome. We are doing this through in-country educational seminars and workshops, visiting with key foreign representatives to the United States, and a variety of other educational and other outreach activities.

As we work to implement our food aid programs as effectively as possible, we must remember that food aid is just one aspect of the efforts to promote world food security. Our food aid efforts go hand in hand with our development efforts, sharing technology, expanding trade, promoting economic reform.

These are all factors that can help grow and reduce poverty, the keys to food security. Toward that end, Secretary Ann Veneman has invited agriculture, environment and trade ministers from 180 countries to an agriculture, science and technology conference scheduled in Sacramento this June.

We know that introducing new technologies offers unprecedented potential for meeting the world's food needs. With that, Mr. Chairman, I will conclude my remarks.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Butler follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAMES G. "JIM" BUTLER, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY FOR FARM AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICES, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I am pleased to come before this Committee with my distinguished colleagues who are dedicated to assisting the millions of hungry and impoverished people in Africa and around the world. The Department of Agriculture is a full partner with the U.S. Agency for International Development in delivering food aid programs that utilize U.S. agricultural products. Secretary Veneman and those of us who implement USDA food assistance programs are dedicated to this critical task.

Just two weeks ago, Secretary Veneman and Administrator Natsios announced two major food assistance efforts using the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust. USDA recently released 200,000 tons of wheat for emergency food assistance in Africa, particularly Ethiopia and Eritrea. In addition, USDA released up to 600,000 tons of wheat for assistance in Iraq. A portion of the wheat for Iraq will be swapped domestically for rice. We anticipate shipping 200,000 metric tons of commodities to Iraq as soon as possible.

These are just the latest U.S. efforts to alleviate the suffering of the estimated 50 million people in the world who face crucial food needs. Food crises in the Horn of Africa and southern Africa threaten some 38 million people with starvation. In addition, we continue to work with the international community to help meet urgent needs in Afghanistan, Central America, and North Korea. The causes of food insecurity in these areas include poverty, ill-conceived agricultural land policies, corruption, droughts, floods, political instability, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

My objective this morning is briefly to discuss issues affecting the implementation of U.S. food assistance programs and to outline the USDA food assistance programs that integrate with the largest U.S. food assistance program—the P.L. 480 Title II program administered by the Agency for International Development. As you know, USDA administers Title I of P.L. 480. USDA is also responsible for the procurement of commodities programmed under all these various food aid programs, and for assuring that commodity specifications are met for each food aid shipment, providing quality control laboratory services, inspection of cargoes, and claims functions.

FOOD AID IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

U.S. production of the major commodities used in foreign food aid programs, including soybeans, soybean meal, corn, and sorghum has dropped to lows not experienced since 1999 for soybeans and meal and since 1995–96 for coarse grains. As a

result, prices for these commodities this year are higher, reducing the quantity of food aid that can be supplied with available funding. A related, complicating factor is a provision that, under PL 480, no agricultural commodity determined to be in short domestic supply may be made available for food aid purposes. Fortunately, there is an offsetting provision that the Secretary may waive the limitation for urgent humanitarian purposes. That is what occurred this year.

The commodity availability waiver in P. L. 480 made it possible for us to provide coarse grains and soybeans to carry out the urgent humanitarian purposes of P.L. 480 this fiscal year. This provided the quantities needed for most of the Title II programs. However, it is important to note that wheat supplies are only marginally available under the P.L. 480 criteria to carry out Title I and Title II programs, and vegetable oil is only available to carry out Title II programs. We have remaining about 1.2 million tons of wheat in the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust that may be made available for urgent humanitarian food assistance, assuming the full use of the 800,000 tons authorized for release for Africa and Iraq.

In your letter of invitation to this hearing, you asked me to comment on the level of coordination between agencies in the Administration. Achieving the best use of our limited food aid resources is the major objective of all of us involved in providing food assistance. At the same time, we must be mindful not to interrupt normal trade flows of commercial markets as we implement food aid policies. In an effort to walk that line efficiently, the inter-agency Food Assistance Policy Council coordinates U.S. food aid policies and programs government-wide. At the program implementation level, the staffs of the Agency for International Development and the USDA meet on a regular basis to review and coordinate program plans and resolve any issues that might arise.

FOOD AID PROGRAMS

Allow me to provide a brief explanation of the objectives of our food aid programs, planned funding levels for Fiscal Year (FY) 2003, and examples of the impact of last year's programs in Africa.

The *P.L. 480, Title I* program focuses on promoting economic development and assisting countries to meet their food import requirements. This government-to-government program provides credit for up to 30 years at very low interest rates. Including carry-over funds from prior years, \$178 million is available for the P.L. 480 Title I program for FY 2003.

Eritrea in Title I Credit is an example of what a Title I program can accomplish. Last year, Eritrea received a \$10-million loan to purchase U.S. wheat. The wheat was sold in local markets, and the proceeds are being used to improve the infrastructure for agricultural production, to train farmers, improve access to credit, develop storage and marketing facilities, and to encourage the development of agro-processing industries. In FY 2003, for Africa, we anticipate using approximately \$61 million of P.L. 480, Title I funds for the Food for Progress Program for government-to-government grant programs in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Cameroon.

The *Food for Progress* program provides commodities to developing countries and emerging democracies to support democracy and private enterprise reforms, including agricultural policy reforms. The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 established new, higher funding ceilings for certain aspects of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) program. CCC funds can be used to purchase commodities; up to \$40 million of CCC funds can be used for associated non-commodity costs, such as ocean freight; and up to \$15 million can be used to provide administrative and technical assistance to the organizations carrying out the programs. It is expected that a total of 400,000 tons of commodities will be provided globally on an annual basis through this program if transportation funding is sufficient to achieve this tonnage. Last year, a total of \$18 million in commodities and CCC funds was provided to seven countries in Africa. These grants supported a wide array of development activities, including financing of agricultural equipment, preventative health care programs, youth vocational training centers, small farmer credit programs, expanding economic associations for women, training for veterinary health providers, and building of rural infrastructure. We anticipate CCC funding will be used to support an additional nine projects in Africa in the current year with a total value estimated at \$33 million.

Section 416(b) of the Agricultural Act of 1949 authorizes donations of surplus CCC stocks to assist people overseas. This year, CCC has significant inventories of nonfat dry milk. Every effort is being made to make this commodity available for foreign food aid programs. While nonfat dry milk is very nutritious, it is challenging to use effectively in international food aid programs largely due to limited access to safe drinking water. We anticipate its use in Africa this year in several countries includ-

ing Angola, the Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sudan, and Tanzania.

In FY 2002, CCC provided 300 metric tons of nonfat dry milk, valued at \$596,000, to Malawi under section 416(b). Overall, last fiscal year African countries received 324,000 metric tons of U.S. commodities worth \$52 million under the program.

The *McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program*, which was authorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, builds on the framework of the \$300-million Global Food for Education (GFE) pilot program implemented by the USDA beginning in 2001. The new program will include pre-school and school feeding projects and maternal, infant, and child nutrition initiatives. The longer-term goal is to provide education as a path to upward mobility and an improved standard of living. The preliminary data for the pilot program show that average enrollment for schools participating in the pilot program increased from 5 to 10 percent. There were 30 pilot programs in 17 African countries. The new McGovern-Dole program will be funded with \$100 million of CCC funds during FY 2003, and we expect that a number of high quality projects will be in Africa.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND TECHNOLOGY

Before closing, I'd like to respond to your letter's question about development strategies in East Africa. Given the magnitude of the problems we face in our efforts to alleviate hunger, it is essential to work hand in hand with the other U.S. government agencies, the World Food Program, and the private voluntary organizations to make the best use of limited resources. Technology is a major tool to spread those resources to their maximum. We also must work harder to encourage other nations to share more fully in providing food assistance and technical assistance to food insecure countries.

Biotechnology has become an important political food aid issue. We have been working to assure food aid recipients and our partners in the food aid community that U.S. food is safe and wholesome. We have been doing this through in-country educational seminars and workshops, visits by key foreign representatives to the United States, and a variety of other educational and outreach activities conducted from Washington and by our staff overseas. Many of these activities have involved African nations. However, we should point out that such efforts have not been necessary in the Horn because these countries have accepted our aid without issue.

We must address the many ungrounded, unscientific concerns about products produced using biotechnology. The U.S. regulatory process for transgenic crops is well coordinated among the federal regulatory agencies that set standards for human, animal, and plant health, and environmental safety. The commodities that we ship overseas commercially and for food aid are the same products sold and consumed here at home.

The issue for food aid intensified last summer when our ability to deliver desperately needed food to African nations was greatly hindered by individuals and organizations opposed to biotechnology who made misguided statements about the U.S. food system. The dissemination of grossly erroneous information and scare tactics were shameful in that they kept much needed, safe American food from reaching those most in need.

We know that introducing new technologies offers unprecedented potential for meeting the world's food needs. That is why Secretary Veneman has invited agriculture, environment, and trade ministers from 180 countries to an agricultural science and technology conference in Sacramento in June.

The conference will focus on the critical role that science and technology can play in raising agricultural productivity in developing countries in an environmentally sustainable way. It will provide a unique opportunity to address access to technologies, new scientific research, and the relationship between regulatory practices and innovation. It will lay the groundwork for the creation of partnerships to help developing countries understand new technologies and adopt them to increase agricultural productivity. Technology is one of the most powerful tools we have to achieve the goals of increasing agricultural productivity, ending famine and improving nutrition.

As we work to implement our food aid programs as effectively as possible, we must remember that food aid is just one aspect of our efforts to promote world food security. Our food aid efforts go hand-in-hand with our developmental efforts—sharing technology, expanding trade, and promoting economic reform. These are all factors that can help produce growth and reduce poverty—the keys to food security.

That concludes my statement, Mr. Chairman. I would be glad to answer any questions that you or members of the Committee have.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you, Dr. Butler.
And now Ms. Sisulu.

STATEMENT OF SHEILA SISULU, AMBASSADOR, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNITED NATIONS WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

Ms. SISULU. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you very much for inviting me to come in and address the issue of the crisis in Ethiopia and Eritrea. I would like to thank Members of the Committee for making the time to come and hear the testimonies on this crisis that we are facing in the Horn of Africa.

I would also like to underscore the appreciation of the World Food Programme for the contribution that is made by the American Government, by stepping up to the plate tirelessly, and we appreciate also the fact that the U.S. Government is contributing more than all of the other donors put together.

But I would like to assure the Committee that we are doing everything possible, under the leadership of our Executive Director, to broaden the base of resources coming to us, and also diversifying it by identifying new and emerging donors, but also urging our traditional donors to do more.

Mr. Chairman, when our Executive Director Jim Morris visited Ethiopia in February, he was struck by the magnitude of the drought, but also by the good will and strong coordination of the government, our staff from World Food Programme, donors and the nongovernmental organizations on the ground.

Congressman Wolf, USAID Administrator Mr. Natsios, and Ambassador Hall were also recently there. We think they would agree that this is an example where, if we have the resources that we need to do the job, we can avoid a catastrophe.

We also want to make sure that the needs in Eritrea are not overshadowed. Granted, sheer numbers of affected are far lower than in Ethiopia, but nearly 60 percent of the population in Eritrea urgently requires food aid.

Let me begin by stressing a few points. We should be proud, as the other speakers said, that the investments that we have made in early warning and food aid response systems have in fact paid off, particularly in Ethiopia, by allowing us to stay on top of the crisis, more can be done to strengthen these systems and to make sure to cover remote regions. But, we are much better able to forecast needs than we were just 3 years ago when we were gearing up for the last major drought in the region.

Also, we are fortunate that we share a commitment to making sure that we never again witness a famine of the proportions seen in Ethiopia in 1984 and 1985. And that commitment has been repeated before the House today.

Up to 1 million people tragically died in that famine, as we know. Most of the assistance that may have saved them arrived only afterwards, much too late. For many people here and around the world, that devastating famine was their first realization of the intense suffering that exists due to inadequate food.

Today I would like to focus on the current situation in Ethiopia and Eritrea, and let you know how we are working, with your sup-

port, to address these needs. I will also talk about some of the challenges that we face and how you can help us to do our job to avert famine.

Over 11 million Ethiopians require food and other relief assistance as we speak. An additional 3 million people need to be monitored very closely and may need assistance in the near future.

In Eritrea, 1.4 million drought affected and an additional 900,000 displaced or recovering from war need food aid. While this is a much smaller number than Ethiopia, it accounts for about two-thirds of the total population.

In both countries, late, inadequate and poorly dispersed rains is the ultimate culprit. Eritrea faces drought for the fourth consecutive year, so the population has no resilience to cope with another year of shortages.

They entered 2003 with the worst crop failure since their independence in 1993. In addition, about one-third of livestock, a major source of revenues for many Eritreans, risk death due to lack of water, pasture and fodder.

The government of Eritrea's Relief and Refugee Commission has appealed for nearly a half a million metric tons of food aid for 2003, including food for 1.4 million drought affected.

In Ethiopia, concerns of drought emerged in the middle of last year. These worries were confirmed by a series of assessments. Production in lowland and marginal crop producing areas was particularly bad, but shortages also exist in traditional surplus production area. In pastoralist areas we are seeing a rise in livestock deaths and a major reduction in livestock prices.

The nutritional situation in both countries has also deteriorated, with malnutrition rates approaching 30 percent in some areas. Both countries also have a large population who rely on food aid for part of the year.

Similarly, Eritrea would require at least 200,000 metric tons of food aid, even if food production was at normal levels. But when a severe drought such as this one occurs, not only the people living in the food-secure areas are affected, but also pastoralists and people in surplus-producing areas who depend on rain-fed agriculture.

The World Food Programme aims to provide over 600,000 metric tons this year to reach 4.6 million people. This will cover 40 percent of the overall requirements for cereal and part of the needs for supplemental food. We expect that the balance will be met by bilateral donations to the Ethiopian Government Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission, and also to NGOs.

Our emergency program in Ethiopia seeks to save lives and prevent mass migration. We provide food aid, along with fortified blended food for the treatment of malnutrition. We also use emergency food aid to mitigate the impact of disasters and help rehabilitate essential household and community assets.

We are seeking to reach 4.6 million people, including children under 5, pregnant and nursing women, the sick, including those affected by HIV and AIDS and their families and the elderly.

In Eritrea, drought needs stand at 1.4 million people. We are providing food aid to 400,000 of those. We urgently need to expand this program to reach 900,000 drought affected people but lack the resources to do so. We are also continuing our program to feed an

additional 500,000 people, reduced from 700,000, who are recovering from the border conflict.

The challenge is in the response. Our extended involvement in the region and the goodwill and cooperation on the part of all involved has allowed us to stay on top of the food needs. However, the needs are massive and exceeding in numbers the 84–85 famine and the more recent drought in 2000. In addition, even where we are having some success in receiving and delivering food aid, we also know that food aid alone is insufficient to prevent famine. Collectively we need to commit to meeting the full range of assistance requirements and rise to several challenges in the face of a growing need.

First and foremost, we, the concerned governments, our sister U.N. Agencies, and our nongovernmental organization partners will need more resources to meet the needs. The world will have to donate a total of 1.4 million metric tons to the relief effort to avert famine. The good news is that we collectively already have pledges—totaling about 70 percent of the total food needs. This can allow food distribution to continue until early August of this year.

However, in order to ensure maximum coverage of targeted beneficiaries, the cereal rations have already been reduced from the planned level of 15 kilograms per person per month to 12.5 kilograms per person per month. This has some risks given that food insecurity this year is especially acute. For the World Food Programme in order to meet our commitment to cover 40 percent of the total needs, we urgently require new contributions.

We also face a critical gap in fortified blended foods which are needed as supplemental rations for nutritional treatment programs. Programs run by the WFP and nongovernment organizations require 128,000 metric tons of blended food to assist malnourished children and mothers and we need it in country immediately, right away. So far, we have only received 50 percent of our total requirements. We urgently need another 10,000 metric tons to cover the priority areas outside the NGO operational areas where malnutrition rates are unacceptably high.

Our resource situation in Eritrea is grim. The World Food Programme needs 260,000 metric tons to reach our target. Currently, we have about 20,000 in country and 40,000 scheduled to arrive soon. It is critical that we find and move an additional 200,000 metric tons in order to continue and expand our program to avoid widespread malnutrition.

Let me take this opportunity again to thank USAID for its support. USAID's Office of Food for Peace has provided us with 148,000 metric tons of title II food aid for Ethiopia this year and has allocated some additional resources to other organizations providing food aid.

The World Food Programme is working closely with USAID in capacity building for early warning, nutritional surveillance, and training local officials in targeting. USAID also gave us 12,000 metric tons to support our drought program in Eritrea. We will need to continue to benefit from the generosity of the American people while also appealing to other donors to provide more aid, as I indicated earlier.

I hope that we can continue to count on your support. It will be important that critical water, health, and agriculture interventions and the U.N. and nongovernmental organizations who implement these programs also receive the funding that they need. Food aid is the overwhelming need in Ethiopia and Eritrea. However, lack of food, poor nutrition and inadequate and unsafe water increase the vulnerability of people to disease. Also livestock and agricultural recovery activities must begin during the emergency to ensure quick recovery. As we saw in the 2000 drought in Ethiopia and as we are currently seeing in Southern Africa, food aid can only achieve its full benefits when it is combined with other interventions.

With regard to HIV and AIDS, an estimated 2.2 million Ethiopians are infected by the virus HIV, including 200,000 children. Almost 1 million Ethiopian children are orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS. In Eritrea, 55,000 people are infected and there are about 24,000 AIDS orphans. HIV/AIDS is a devastating disease, destroying the fabric of families, communities, and even government infrastructure. HIV/AIDS leaves already poor families in a very bad position to cope with food shortages. Special attention is also needed to reach children orphaned by HIV/AIDS who can be overlooked in the relief planning process.

Awareness of the impact of HIV/AIDS on food security and the need to target HIV/AIDS-affected families with assistance is now a critical component in all World Food Programme programs in high prevalence areas. In Ethiopia, we will continue to provide HIV/AIDS awareness training to all drivers of transport companies used by the World Food Programme to avoid further spreading the disease as a consequence of the relief effort.

I know many of you share our concerns that more needs to be done to address the consequences of this terrible disease. We must use our programs to build the resilience of the people against such disasters and to build national and local capacity to handle crises. Part of our emergency response is to make investments that build economy growth and help people better cope with these droughts that are coming with increasing frequency and affecting growing numbers.

Chairman HYDE. Could you summarize?

Ms. SISULU. The Government of Ethiopia has asked us to deliver food aid in ways that encourage those who can work to create assets that will benefit them in the future. We are linking our emergency programs with our long-term activities such as school feeding, which already focuses on disaster-prone areas, to ensure that the progress we have made is not erased by the latest crisis.

In conclusion, I hope that I have impressed upon you the urgency of the situation in Ethiopia and Eritrea and the importance that we redouble our efforts to prevent famine. The World Food Programme welcomes the continued generous support we receive from the United States as well as your ongoing effort to encourage other donors to also contribute generously to this important cause.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Sisulu follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SHEILA SISULU, AMBASSADOR, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, UNITED NATIONS WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

I am honoured to be here today to talk with you about the unfolding crisis in Ethiopia and Eritrea and the role of the World Food Programme. When our Executive Director, Jim Morris, visited Ethiopia several weeks ago he was struck by the magnitude of the drought, but also by the good will and strong coordination of the government, our staff, donor representatives and the NGOs on the ground. Congressman Frank Wolf, USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios and Ambassador Tony Hall were also recently there and we think they would agree with WFP that this is a clear example of a situation where, if we have the resources that we need to do the job, we can avert a catastrophe. WFP's Executive Director was not able to visit Eritrea on his short trip but we want to make sure that the needs there are not overshadowed. Sheer numbers of affected are far lower than in Ethiopia but nearly 60 percent of the population urgently requires food aid.

Let me begin by stressing a few points.

We should all be proud that the investments that we have made in early warning and food aid response systems, particularly in Ethiopia, which is an immense country, have paid off by allowing us to stay on top of the crisis. More can be done to strengthen these systems, particularly in the more remote regions, but we are much better able to forecast needs in a timely way than we were just three years ago, when we were gearing up for the last major drought in the region.

Also, we are fortunate that we all share a commitment to making sure that we never again witness a famine of the proportions seen in Ethiopia in 1984/85. Up to 1 million people tragically died in that famine and most of the assistance that might have saved them arrived only afterwards. For many people here and the world over, that devastating famine was their first realization of the intense suffering that exists in parts of the world due to inadequate food. The stick figures emerging from the dusty plains of Ethiopia and the Sudan border remain imbedded in our minds. It was during this famine that a clear US policy emerged from former President Ronald Reagan, separating humanitarian aid and politics. "A hungry child knows no politics" endures as a central tenet of US policy and remains critical to the World Food Programme's efforts.

I am also struck by how much easier it is to work in countries where there is a strong government commitment to humanitarianism and the needs of their people, which is clearly the case in both Ethiopia and Eritrea. Obviously this is a major difference from the mid-80s. There are serious challenges in Ethiopia and Eritrea—both countries face deep poverty and have major structural food deficits to contend with—but the governments and civil society are committed to building a better future and we are committed to helping them succeed.

Today I would like to focus on the current situation in Ethiopia and Eritrea and let you know how we are working, with your support, to address the needs. I will also talk about some of the challenges we face and how you can help us do our job to avert famine.

CURRENT SITUATION

Over 11 million Ethiopians require food and other relief assistance. An additional 3 million people need to be monitored very closely; they are in a precarious condition and may need assistance in the near future. In Eritrea a smaller number—1.4 million drought-affected and an additional 900,000 displaced or recovering from war—require food aid, but this accounts for about two-thirds of the total population.

In both countries, late, inadequate and poorly dispersed rain is the primary culprit.

In Eritrea, 2002 was the fourth year of drought, leaving the population with no resilience to cope with another year of shortages. A November multi-agency assessment showed 2002 production at 54,400 metric tons, more than 70 percent below the national average. The population entered 2003 with a near total loss of their cereal harvest—the worst crop failure the country has experienced since its independence in 1993. Those who managed to cultivate something will consume it by the spring. In addition, about one-third of livestock, a major source of livelihood for many Eritreans, risk death due to lack of water, pasture and fodder. The amount of grain pastoralists can get from selling one animal is decreasing rapidly as more are forced to make distress sales. For those whose income is based on livestock, this has a devastating impact on their ability to buy food.

The Government of Eritrea's Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) has appealed for nearly a half million metric tons of food aid for 2003. Of this, 290,000 is for the 1.4 million drought affected. More than 900,000 additional people are also targeted for food aid, including internally displaced people, returnees, demobilized

soldiers and vulnerable urban dwellers, including victims of HIV/AIDs and their families.

In Ethiopia, concerns of a drought began to emerge in the middle of last year, following a prolonged dry spell between the end of the short rains (called *belg*) in April 2002 and the main crop season rains (called *meher*) which began four to six weeks late at the end of July. Farmers delayed preparing and planting their fields, and opted to plant low-yielding, short-cycle crops such as teff (the grain they use for bread), wheat and pulses, instead of maize and sorghum. They also invested less than normal in improved seeds and fertilizers. Once the rains finally came, they were lighter than usual and unevenly distributed, reducing crop production. By August the government raised its estimate of people requiring food aid for the year and we started planning for various grim scenarios for 2003.

Two major country-wide assessments in November further revealed the extent of the problem. They forecasted total production of cereal and pulses at about 9.27 million tons, down 25 percent from the previous year and down 21 percent from the five year average. Food aid estimates for 2003 were set at 1.4 million tons. Production in lowland and marginal crop producing areas was particularly bad, but shortages of 20–30 percent were also found in traditional surplus production areas. In pastoralist areas, such as the east and north-east, poor rains decreased available forage and water, leading both to an increase in livestock death rates and an up to 50 percent reduction in livestock prices. In some areas, pastoralists were forced to migrate early with their herds and flocks in search of better pasture; in others, competition over scarce water and pasture has led to conflict.

The nutritional situation in both countries has also deteriorated. In Ethiopia, rates of acute malnutrition have approached 30 percent in areas of Afar and over 15 percent in Amhara, Oromiya and Somali regions. In Eritrea, acute malnutrition rates range from 14–28 percent. Normally anything above 10 percent is serious and beyond 15 percent is critical.

There are always at least 4–5 million people in Ethiopia who are chronically food-insecure and, even in a good year, rely on food aid to meet their minimum daily requirements for part of the year. Similarly, Eritrea would likely require at least 200,000 metric tons of aid, even if food production was at normal levels. However, when a severe drought such as this one occurs, not only the people living in the chronically food insecure and drought prone areas are affected, but also pastoralists and people in surplus producing areas who depend on rain-fed agriculture.

MEETING THE NEEDS

WFP works closely with the government of Ethiopia's Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) to address food needs in Ethiopia. We aim to provide over 600,000 metric tons this year in order to reach 4.6 million people. This will cover 40 percent of the overall requirements for cereals and part of the needs for supplementary food for 2003. The balance is normally met by bilateral donations to the DPPC or NGOs.

Our emergency programme in Ethiopia seeks to save lives and prevent mass migration, by providing adequate bulk food along with fortified, blended food for the treatment of malnutrition. We also use emergency food aid to mitigate the impact of disasters and help rehabilitate essential household and community assets. Over the past year we provided an estimated 2.5 million people with emergency food rations. In our expanded programme to reach 4.6 million, we will continue to focus on children under-five, pregnant and nursing women, the sick (including those affected by HIV/AIDs and their families) and the elderly.

In Eritrea, over the past two years we have provided food aid to up to 200,000 drought affected people and an additional 750,000 people, most of whom needed help recovering after the border conflict. Now drought needs stand at 1.4 million, with 900,000 other vulnerable people also in need of assistance. We are currently providing 400,000 people who had no harvest last year due to drought with food aid. We urgently need to expand this program to reach 900,000 drought affected people but we do not have the resources to do this. Our new operation, targeting a total of 900,000 drought affected people with 130,000 tons, will need to be in place and well resourced by April, when the numbers needing food aid will swell as existing food stocks are consumed. We are also continuing our programme to feed an additional 500,000 people (reduced from 700,000) who are recovering from the border conflict.

We have a well established and strong logistical network in the region to support our deliveries. Some of you may recall that we faced major logistical impediments in Ethiopia during the last drought in 2000. The Assab port in Eritrea was off limits due to the border conflict and we were forced to import huge tonnages into Ethiopia

through previously under-used ports. This required serious upgrading of regional port and road infrastructure. Thankfully, these past investments continue to benefit our efforts today. We are confident that the Djibouti port is capable of handling an average offloading rate of 5000 tons per day and the up to 1.5 million tons will need to flow through it, and that a combination of rail, road and the Ethiopian trucking system can move the food through the country. We don't anticipate significant problems in Eritrea where the tonnages are much smaller. In the event that the needs rapidly increase due to further failure of rains, we have also identified other ports and routes that can be used.

CHALLENGES IN THE RESPONSE

We have been fortunate that our extended involvement in the region, particularly in Ethiopia, along with the good will and cooperation on the part of all involved, has allowed us to stay on top of the food needs. However, the needs are massive, exceeding in numbers (but not percentage of the population) the 84/85 famine and the more recent drought in 2000. In addition, even where we are having some success in receiving and delivering food aid, we also know that food aid alone is insufficient to prevent famine. Collectively, we need to commit to meeting the full range of assistance requirements and rise to several challenges in the face of the growing need:

Resource Requirements

First and foremost, we, the concerned governments, our sister UN agencies and our NGO partners will need more resources to meet the needs. The world will have to donate a total of 1.4 million metric tons to the Ethiopia relief effort to avert a famine. The good news is that we collectively already have pledges totaling about 70 percent of the total bulk food need. This can allow food distributions to continue until early August 2003. However, in order to ensure maximum coverage of targeted beneficiaries, the cereal rations, which assume that beneficiaries still have some access to food, have had to be reduced from the planned level of 15 kg per person per month to 12.5 kg per person per month. This is a fairly common practice in Ethiopia but it does have some risks this year given that food insecurity is especially acute. For WFP, in order to meet our commitment to cover 40 percent of the total needs, we urgently require new contributions.

We face a critical gap in fortified, blended foods, which are needed as supplementary rations for nutritional treatment programmes. Programmes run by WFP and NGOs require almost 128,000 metric tons of blended food to assist malnourished children and mothers, and we need it in country right away. So far, we have only received 50 percent of our total requirements. We urgently need another 10,000 metric tons to cover the priority areas outside the NGO operational areas where malnutrition rates are unacceptably high.

Our resource situation for Eritrea is less positive. WFP needs 260,000 MT to reach our target. Currently we have about 20,000 in country and 40,000 scheduled to arrive soon, which will address a total caseload of 900,000 until April. It is critical that we find an additional 200,000 metric tons pledged and into the pipeline quickly in order to avoid widespread malnutrition.

I should take this opportunity to thank the U.S. Agency for International Development for its support to our efforts so far and its continued commitment to addressing food needs in the Horn of Africa. For Ethiopia in 2003, USAID's Office of Food for Peace has provided us with 148,000 metric tons of Title II food aid, valued at over \$77 million dollars and has allocated some additional resources to other organizations providing food aid. WFP is working closely with USAID in capacity building for early warning, nutritional surveillance and training local officials in targeting. To support our drought programme in Eritrea, USAID recently gave us 12,000 metric tons, valued at \$5 million.

We will need to continue to benefit from the generosity of the American people, while also appealing to other traditional and new donors to provide aid. I hope that I can count on your support.

Adequate support for non food programmes

It will be important that our UN and NGO colleagues who plan to implement critical water, health and agriculture interventions also receive the funding that they need. Food aid is the overwhelming need in Ethiopia and Eritrea. However, as we have learned, lack of food and poor nutrition, combined with inadequate and unsafe water, increase the vulnerability of people to disease, which is the primary cause of death during famines. In some areas, people are walking three to five hours to collect drinking water. Moreover, activities that focus on livestock and agricultural recovery, even during the midst of the crisis, are critical in ensuring a quick recovery.

ery. As we saw during the 2000 drought in Ethiopia, and as we are currently seeing in Southern Africa, food aid can indeed only achieve its full health benefits when it is combined with other interventions.

HIV/AIDS

An estimated 2.2 million Ethiopians are infected by HIV/AIDS, including 200,000 children, and almost 1 million children are orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS. In Eritrea, 55,000 people are infected and there are about 24,000 AIDS orphans. Southern Africa has shown us how devastating HIV/AIDS is and how it destroys the very fabric of families, communities and even government infrastructure. HIV/AIDS leaves already poor families in a very bad position to cope with food shortages, having already lost their productive labor and given increased expenditures on medical costs. Special attention is also needed to reach children orphaned by HIV/AIDS who can be overlooked in the relief planning process.

Awareness of the impact of HIV/AIDS on food security and the need to target HIV/AIDS affected families with assistance is becoming a critical component in all WFP programmes in high prevalence areas. In Ethiopia, we will also continue to provide HIV/AIDS awareness training to all drivers of transport companies used by WFP to avoid further spreading the disease as a consequence of the relief effort. I know many of you share my concern that more needs to be done to stem the tide and address the consequences of this terrible disease.

Link to Longer Term Activities

In countries such as Ethiopia and Eritrea, where there are major, chronic food needs and recurring cycles of drought, it would be irresponsible for us to simply provide a band aid. We must use our programmes to the extent possible to build the resilience of people against future disasters, while also building national and local capacity to handle crises. Part of our emergency response in the region is to make investments that build economic growth and enable people to better cope with these dramatic droughts that are coming with increasing frequency and affecting growing numbers, especially women and children. We have some very good examples in Ethiopia where minimal investments in food aid have created assets that left chronically food insecure people in disaster prone areas much better positioned to cope with this drought.

The government of Ethiopia is very keen on such programmes and has asked that we deliver food aid in ways that encourage able-bodied participants to create assets that will benefit them in the future. We will try to distribute about one-third of our emergency assistance through such employment generation schemes and will ensure that such activities are planned and implemented by communities. Also, in both Ethiopia and Eritrea we will build synergies between our emergency and our longer-term programs, such as school feeding, which already focus on disaster prone areas to ensure that critical gains made are not erased by the latest crisis.

CONCLUSION

I hope that I have impressed upon you the urgency of the situation in Ethiopia and Eritrea and the importance that we redouble our efforts to prevent famine. The World Food Programme welcomes the focus of this important Committee on hunger in the Horn of Africa. We also welcome the continued, generous support that we receive from the United States and your ongoing efforts to encourage other donors to also contribute generously to this important cause.

Thank you.

Chairman HYDE. I am going to rearrange the order of witnesses. We have one witness left and it seems to me appropriate if we ask that witness to join this panel so we can have one round of questions and everybody gets an opportunity to ask a question.

So if Dr. Mesfin Wolde Mariam would step forward and perhaps sit next to Mr. Larson, we will have a microphone available for you. Mr. Mesfin Wolde Mariam is one of Ethiopia's leading geographers. He has faced harassment and imprisonment for his work which states that political rather than natural forces have caused the countries' famines and recurring food crises. His scholarly research led him to conclude that the Ethiopian peasant is in a persistently vulnerable state because of poor governance. He has argued that

basic social and cultural changes, together with land reform, must take place in order for the cycle of famine to end.

The Ethiopian Government has arrested Dr. Wolde Mariam a number of times over the past several years for his criticism of government policy. On May 8, 2001, the Ethiopian security forces arrested him in relation to a seminar that he and a colleague conducted on academic rights and freedoms. The offices of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council which he founded was shut down for 10 days and searched by the police following his arrest. After spending 4 weeks in jail, a judge ordered the Ethiopian Government should release Professor Wolde Mariam from police custody on \$1,299 bail.

Harvard chose Professor Mesfin to serve as the fall 2002 Scholar at Risk, since he faces the risk of persecution because of his scholarship, beliefs, and political courage. He was awarded a fellowship at the W.E.B. DuBois Institute for Afro-American Research in collaboration with the university Committee on Human Rights Studies. He has also served as a Fulbright scholar.

Chairman HYDE. Dr. Mesfin, we would be delighted to hear from you if you can condense it to 5 minutes. I know that is quite a trick. And then if the panel will make themselves available for questions. Thank you, Dr. Mesfin.

STATEMENT OF MESFIN WOLDE-MARIAM, CHAIRMAN, THE ETHIOPIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, AND RESEARCH FELLOW, HARVARD UNIVERSITY, DEPARTMENT OF AFRO-AMERICAN STUDIES, W.E.B. DuBOIS INSTITUTE FOR AFRO-AMERICAN STUDIES

Mr. MESFIN. Thank you Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee. I am honored to be here and thank you for the kind words. I will not exceed the 5 minutes. I have made a summary of the already short statement that I have prepared for this Committee. I will be talking on the socioeconomic origin of famine.

The socioeconomic origin of famine has two pivotal concepts: One is vulnerability to famine and the other is the process of famine. Some of the previous speakers have really very well explained some of these concepts. Peasants engaged in subsistence production are hindered between two forces, the natural forces and the socioeconomic forces. The difference between these forces is that the natural factors are adverse periodically, while the socioeconomic forces are always adverse.

Traditionally, Ethiopian peasants always kept grain in store not only for bad years, but also for several social occasions such as weddings and memorials for the dead. Modern administration brought with it extortions of cash in the form of taxation. Contributions were also sought for projects and, now, debts for fertilizers and seeds. Every year, peasants are impoverished by extortion. The capacity of the peasants to save either in grain or cash is rendered impossible. The officials, with their inflexible demands, invariably appear during harvest time. In order to meet their cash obligations all peasants take their products at the same time. And because prices fall abysmally, they have to sell more of their produce. What is left is not sufficient to take the peasants and their families to the next harvest.

It is well known by all nutritionists in Ethiopia that in every normal year from about March to September, Ethiopian peasants suffer from what is known as postharvest and preharvest hunger. This is what I call the socioeconomic origin of famine. The constant impoverishment of peasants and their incapacity to save has nothing to do with the natural forces, but with oppression and exploitation.

It is important to realize that famine is not an event, but a process that takes from 5 to 7 months. Famine is not the same as ordinary hunger, malnutrition, or undernourishment. I define famine as follows: Famine is the most negative state of food consumption under which people, unable to replace even the energy they lose in basic metabolism, consume whatever is stored in their bodies. That means they literally consume themselves to death. That is famine.

The process of famine is a continuation of the preharvest hunger. When any adverse natural factor brings about crop failure, it means there is no harvest. Any responsible and responsive government would have intervened immediately with relief assistance. Five to seven months passed, pushing the poor peasants to the cliff of famine. It becomes news only when peasants and livestock become victims of mass death by starvation, sometime in March and April.

This omission of what the regime ought to have done immediately after a crop failure is known, marks the second manifestation of irresponsibility; the first being the oppression and exploitation of peasants. In fact, the regime sends its cash extortionists even in time of famine. This is a fact. The poor peasants will be forced to sell their livestock, even their oxen, to pay their taxes, contributions and debts, thus ensuring another year of famine. That is why a famine year is always followed by another.

It can be stated with confidence that Ethiopia's agricultural resources, such as land, water resources, and climatic diversity are such that would make the country a surplus producer. It is misguided policies and mismanagement of these resources that lead to impoverishment of the people, especially the peasants.

In 1967, an American agricultural economist, John Fisher, in a very thorough study he made, recommended that agricultural production should increase by 4.4 percent. He said then this is more than 200 percent of the rate by which total food production has been increasing in recent years. To achieve such a rate of growth is possible, but, short of superior effort by Ethiopia, is improbable. That is what he wrote in 1967. We already had a second famine of modern times at that time.

Since then, all Ethiopian peasants have been dispossessed of land. The regime can't understand this is a disincentive to agricultural development. Furthermore, it cannot understand that its stubborn policy of attempting to modernize minuscule and fragmented peasant plots of less than one hectare is a futile exercise. As long as Ethiopian peasants remain powerless and in bondage, families will continue to decimate Ethiopian peasants and the regime will continue to call on the international community for relief assistance. We have done this since 1959. And it will be easier to count the number of years when the United States has not given

relief assistance rather than when it did. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROYCE. [Presiding.] Thank you very much.
[The prepared statement of Mr. Mesfin follows.]

**FULL STATEMENT ON FAMINE IN ETHIOPIA
THE SOCIOECONOMIC ORIGIN OF FAMINE**

FROM: MESFIN WOLDE-MARIAM
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 BOIS INSTITUTE FOR AFRO-AMERICAN RESEARCH)
DATE: APRIL 1, 2003
**TO: THE U.S. HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL
 RELATIONS**

1. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

It may be appropriate to give a brief introduction about my credentials to talk about famine. It was in 1959, the first year I started teaching at the University College of Addis Abeba that I heard about famine in Tigray the region from where the Weyyane emerged. In order to verify the rumour and break the official silence I took the bus to Tigray. From Maychew, Quiha and Meqele to Addigrat and the western towns of Tigray I saw the most horrible sight of corpses of men, women and children in all the streets. When I returned to Addis Abeba I tried to publish my observations on the newspapers. It was impossible. I waited until Atse Haile Sillase returned from Moscow and wrote a letter to him. A few days later, I received a letter ordering me to join the group that was being sent to Tigray to distribute 20,000 quintals of grain. I participated in that and when no more grain was arriving for the multitudes of famine victims I could not stay there any longer and returned to Addis.

I had never been so ashamed of humanity with all its grandiose religious and social values as I was then. I had never been ashamed of being an Ethiopian and of the sense of pride and honour that went with it as I was then. I felt helpless and totally useless. The only success was that the famine of Tigray became public knowledge. The sight of famine could not be erased from my mind. Even in my sleep, I revisited those horrifying, depressing and painful scenes. In 1976 when I refused to teach in accordance with Marxist-Leninist principles, I designed a research project on famine and with some assistance from Clark University, my Alma Mater, conducted a thorough research for nearly eight years. In 1984, I published a book under the title: *RURAL VULNERABILITY TO FAMINE IN ETHIOPIA: 1958-1977*. After that, with some assistance from the University of Bern, I embarked on a field research to test the previous mainly archival research. In 1991, I published: *SUFFERING UNDER GOD'S ENVIRONMENT: A VERTICAL STUDY OF THE PREDICAMENT OF PEASANTS IN NORTH-CENTRAL*

ETHIOPIA. Altogether, I have spent at least 15 years in studying the famine in Ethiopia.

2.THE SOCIOECONOMIC ORIGIN OF FAMINE

How do we explain the persistent famine in Ethiopia for the last forty-five years under three seemingly different regimes? In spite of their apparent difference all three have one common characteristic: they are all despotic, with no accountability or responsiveness. If we rank the three despotic regimes, the present one will not come out as the best as some believe.

In general there are three basic explanations of famine. First, the victims themselves explain away famine as the wrath of God, a punishment for their sins. One cannot argue with that explanation which is beyond the realm of reason.

The most widely held explanation of famine is drought. In fact for some people drought and famine are almost synonymous. Although nothing can be further from the truth, intellectual inertia has enthroned this apology for famine as an explanation. The mere fact that there are many countries in the world, which experience drought but never famine, does not seem even to raise some doubt in the believers of this explanation.

In Ethiopia drought is not the only reason for crop failure. We have too much rainfall, hailstones, armyworms, the erratic monthly distribution of the rainfall, although the total amount may be adequate. These so-called explanations of famine are not better than the peasant explanation, because they are impervious to reason.

The socioeconomic origin of famine, a relatively simple concept based on empirical data has not so far attracted any serious attention. The following is a brief exposition of the socioeconomic origin of famine.

3. VULNERABILITY TO FAMINE

- Vulnerability to famine is characteristic of subsistence producers or peasants, and not of commercial farmers.
- Vulnerability to famine is generated by the oppression and exploitation of the peasants by despotic regimes and unfavourable market forces.
- Since the advent of the Marxist-Leninist regime, all Ethiopian peasants have become landless. They have no ownership rights. They have no security of tenure. They are allowed to operate their small plots of land by constantly expressing their loyalty to the regime.
- The average holding of a peasant is one to one and one-half acres of fragmented plots.

- The need of the regime to indoctrinate the peasants necessitates numerous meetings which peasants are forced to attend, thus wasting valuable working time.
- The regime's need to change and increase its army takes away the able-bodied peasants, leaving old men, women and children in the rural areas.
- Every year at the time of harvest extortionists in the form of collectors of taxes, contributions and debts, descend on the peasants forcing them to pay or to go to jail.
- All peasants take their produce to the market at about the same time and become victims of the stubborn law of the market, because prices for their produce fall drastically. In order to meet their cash obligations they are forced to sell more of their produce.
- This systematic extortion does not only preclude any possibility of saving grain or cash, it also reduces the peasants' food intake.
- Immediately after the harvest season, food consumption of peasants begins a downward trend. This may be called the post-harvest hunger (in March, April and May). During the summer months (June, July and August) food consumption reaches its lowest level. This is the period of pre-harvest hunger.
- Both the post-harvest hunger and the pre-harvest hunger are phenomena of normal years. Adverse natural conditions have almost nothing to do with them. There is, therefore, no reason to blame the natural conditions for them.

These are the conditions that create vulnerability to famine. These are the conditions that point to the socioeconomic origin of famine.

4. THE PROCESS OF FAMINE

- What happens if and when the summer rains fail in June, July and August will certainly affect negatively the following harvest.
- If the summer rains fail, the pre-harvest hunger will intensify and continue through what would have been harvest months (September, October and November).
- The collectors of taxes, contributions and debts for fertilizers and seeds will come with their inflexible demands for cash. The fact that peasants have been going through nine months of hunger and the fact that harvests have failed is not their concern.
- Peasants sell whatever they have ---sheep, goats, and cattle---in order to avoid going to prison. This extortion of their assets impoverishes them further.

- At such a time, the normal post-harvest and pre-harvest hunger gradually turns into famine, total lack of food. I define famine as follows:
Famine is the most negative state of food consumption under which people, unable to replace even the energy they lose in basal metabolism, consume whatever is stored in their bodies; that means they literally consume themselves to death (Mesfin Wolde-Mariam, *Rural Vulnerability to Famine in Ethiopia: 1958-1977*, p.9).
- A crop failure coming after two successive periods of hunger, the post harvest hunger and the pre-harvest hunger, allows hunger to transform into famine. The post-harvest hunger intensifies and expands into famine.
- The failure of the regime to intervene immediately after crop failure, which would be known by September and October, accelerates the process of famine, the slow and painful death of peasants.
- It is five or seven months later, in February, March and April, that famine turns into a mass killer.
- When famine has reached this stage the damage to human life is extremely high. Moreover, it brings about a total disintegration of society and loss of the necessary assets such as oxen.
- After such a devastating famine, it is not possible for surviving peasants to start normal agricultural activities in the following season. So, the famine continues for a second year.

5. CONCLUSION

Cruel and persistent exploitation and impoverishment of peasants has been the normal practice of successive despotic regimes. Adverse natural factors simply accelerate the process of famine generated by the despotic regimes. Today, the mere fact that even after crop failure the regime drags its feet to shift the responsibility for its ineptitude to the international community and allows peasants and pastoralists to die of famine is proof that it has no value for human life. It has the means to purchase killing machines for suppressing the people and for engaging in senseless wars, but not for providing relief assistance to impoverished peasants on the verge of certain death.

The fact that Ethiopian young people are obliged to become canon fodders by the thousands for the land that is not theirs does not bother the members of the Weyyane regime. One landlord party holds about eleven million peasants, or about 55 million persons, hostage. The regime uses the peasants that it continually impoverishes to extract economic assistance. Even if the regime used the assistance properly, there is no way of bringing

about development without liberalizing its monopoly on land. Moreover, the miniscule and fragmented peasant holdings can hardly be modernized.

How can such small farms that are getting even smaller as the population increases warrant the various inputs and the modern agricultural instruments? The leaders of the regime have often stated that they have and will continue to have the unwavering support of the peasants in the futile exercise of the fake so-called elections. The unstated policy is to keep the peasants that constitute 85% of the population politically powerless, economically impoverished, and socially backward. A firm grip on the peasants ensures the fake legitimacy to govern the country. Members of the ruling party often get 100% of the votes in the so-called elections.

In 1967, an American agricultural economist, John Fischer, recommended that agricultural production should increase by 4.4%. Then he added: "***This is more than 200% of the rate by which total food production has been increasing in recent years. To achieve such a rate of growth is possible but short of superior effort by Ethiopia—is improbable.***" Apart from supplying relief assistance since 1959, the United States had created an Agricultural College in Alemaya, eastern Ethiopia, with the faculty from Oklahoma State University. Today, none of the senior and most experienced graduates of this College are to be found in Ethiopia. The present regime in particular has a clear aversion to educated persons. It prefers to start from zero so that nothing will even appear better or greater than itself. The present regime is clearly engaged in a process of destroy and build.

When the suppressed energy of the Ethiopian people is released in true freedom, and when Ethiopia will have a government that is responsive and responsible, there shall not be famine in Ethiopia. Ethiopia's agricultural resources---land, water resources and climatic diversity--- can be made abundantly productive to enable the country to become an important exporter of a variety of agricultural products. I do not have any doubt about that. But as long as the peasants remain powerless and in bondage, and as long as the mismanagement of agricultural resources continues famine will always be a problem for which the international community will be called upon to provide relief assistance.

Mr. ROYCE. We will just hold it down here. The question I wanted to ask you—you heard earlier as Congressman Lantos explained the collective exasperation of Congress with a senseless war that was fought several years ago by Eritrea and Ethiopia—how did that war affect these countries' ability to address this famine? As I understand it, people remain displaced as a result of the war. You have got land mines that preclude the use of a lot of agricultural land. So there is the question of the true cost of the war, which is a component of this besides the exploitation of peasant farmers that you discussed.

And I was going to ask you about the economic and agricultural policies that have been used that have harmed the country's ability to feed itself. As you explained, much of the land there has been in the hands of the state. What recommendations do you have for increasing agricultural productivity in Ethiopia and in Eritrea and your remarks on the true cost of that war? Thank you.

Mr. MESFIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The war definitely has a very serious impact on this. It is a most stupid war. It is not only the cost for the weapons and so forth that the regime spent that must be taken into account, it is also the able-bodied people that were taken from the rural areas, from farms. Many able-bodied persons were taken out of the farms and have become counter forces there, and eventually the rural areas in many parts of Ethiopia have remained with only women, small children, and older people. This has happened before at the time of the previous regime in its wars, and this is exactly what is happening now.

And so the priorities that the regime has for that war, it was able to have resources, to buy all those weapons, airplanes and tanks and so forth. But when people are starving, it cannot buy out those resources that it has. Suddenly the international community would be without responsibility.

Recently, there was—it is normal, the Ambassador here wrote a letter to *The Washington Post*; without quick action by the international community, the drought crisis will endanger millions of our citizens. Now the responsibility becomes that of the international community when that regime itself has not met its own responsibility, it has not enabled the peasants to save grain, it has not enabled the peasants to save cash. And so when they reach the cliff by oppression and exploitation, it waits and even then, even then as I can testify, even in time in famine, those extortionists still go to the rural areas and demand payment.

So it is mismanagement of our resources. If we manage our resources properly, if the peasants could be motivated by their own land—they tell us, if we give them land, they will sell it. So what if they sell it? They will come to the urban areas. So what if they come to the urban areas? They are coming now by the hundreds, although sometimes at night they take them out and throw them in the forest. That is no reduction of poverty by eliminating poor people. So there are ways.

Ethiopia does not lack the resources to produce sufficient for its own consumption. In fact the climatic—the diversity of climate in Ethiopia will allow it to produce a variety of crops, fruits, and vegetables to export to surrounding countries and to Europe practically

every month of the year. Every month of the year can be a harvest month in Ethiopia.

Mr. ROYCE. Lastly, I wanted to ask Administrator Natsios about the food crisis in Zimbabwe. Mr. Natsios, you stated this is not about drought and it is a completely preventable situation, a tragedy in the true sense of the word. And I would like to know if the Mugabe government is still using food as a weapon in its campaign against its political opposition in Zimbabwe.

Mr. NATSIOS. Let me first say that some reprehensible things took place this past week in which 500 members of the opposition were arrested for demonstrating against interference in the recent local elections and attempts to manipulate those elections including, I think, the Vice Chairman of the opposition party was arrested. And so the oppression of the population continues.

But in addition to that, the government seems not to understand that the confiscation of the large farms by the state and then the giving of those farms to members of the inner circle of the ruling party and relatives of President Mugabe has done an enormous amount of damage to the food system in the country.

The reservoirs were full when the drought took place. Half of the system, agricultural system is irrigated. If they had let those farms farm, the big irrigated farms, they could have used the water in the reservoir to overcome the reduction in production in the rain-fed area of the country last year. And so there is a serious problem with production. We estimate production may be down as much as 80 percent this year over the average of the past—before the droughts of 5 years.

So there is a massive reduction of food production in the country, to a disastrous level. People can usually take, in a relatively prosperous country, 1 year of drought without having mass casualties. They can't do it for 2 years. The Zimbabwean people were among the best educated people, a 92 percent literacy rate. It had an advanced infrastructure and advanced agricultural system, and he has literally destroyed it. It is one of the worst examples in African history of gross mismanagement, of predatory government policy, and of tyranny over its own people. And I want to say it is a terrible tragedy to a functional society of an educated people to have this happened.

They have used food as a weapon. Matabeleland is a region of the country that has traditionally been in opposition to Dr. Mugabe and his party. They have never liked him, never voted for him, and they have attempted to shut off all food distributions in those areas and prevent reporters from going in to see what the consequence is. We are not seeing mass starvation yet. But with a second year of reduced harvests, I think we are going to face famine conditions. Their malnutrition rates are rising. We have some examples in some provinces, according to the NGOs and church groups we talk to, of children whose parents are of the opposition, being pulled out of feeding lines and told they will not eat because their parents supported the opposition candidates in the last election. So there is a politicization, not of our food aid—our food aid has gone through NGOs and the World Food Programme. None of it has gone to the government and none of it will go to the government.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Administrator Natsios. We will go to the Ranking Member of the African Subcommittee, Mr. Don Payne, for his questions.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. I would like to thank Congressman Wolf who has done so much over the years in bringing problems of drought and famine to our attention. I think those graphic pictures certainly said it all.

Just quickly, you know before I ask the question, I do want to mention that I would hope and was hoping that I know that Mr. Natsios has an interest in agricultural assistance as a part of and as a tool of USAID and I would hope that USAID can really get the funding to increase agricultural assistance. I don't think that we see it in the Millennium Program, some of the new efforts that are going to be made. But I think it is essential that water programs, irrigation programs, farmer-to-farmer programs that Mrs. Eva Clayton has talked about legislating—of course we have dropped agricultural assistance by 50 percent over the last decade or so from the U.S. In our aid programs, and so I hope we can turn that around.

Secondly, it is very difficult for African countries, even if the governments have bad programs, to really have African countries get on an equal footing. We will continue to see highly subsidized U.S. And European farmers. As you know, in the rich countries, \$311 billion a year is spent on agricultural subsidies. Now it makes it very difficult for a poor farmer in a developing country to even raise chickens at less than what they can buy them even if the cost goes up tremendously. And so with continued agricultural subsidies in the USA, which is one of our bigger—I guess other than defense, agricultural subsidies is one of the biggest growing parts of our budget, and the Europeans do the same thing, I think it makes it difficult for countries that would naturally be agricultural, Nigeria, some of the countries that have land and perhaps where the water is more dependable, they could get into agriculture. But if they are not going to be able—the 311 billion is twice the amount of the total exports from developing nations around the world what the subsidy is from the Western countries, so that is going to be an overall problem.

Let me just ask a question regarding being able to get food aid in. Mr. Natsios, you mentioned a very important thing; that droughts were cyclical but they were about 10 years apart. 1962 to 1972, I was in Ethiopia up in Wallo Province and Dese and all that during the distribution of food in the 1972 drought. And then the 1983 drought came about. The 1972 was also not told to the world, and that is when they deposed the emperor, but we find that the contractions become shorter.

How do you see us getting out of this when the droughts—I am not talking about the so-called man-made droughts, but the ones that have been cyclical, rather long, how can we deal with their reduction from 10 years; and then it was 1982 and 1989 and we got to about 5 years. Now we are looking at 2- to 3-year cycles. What would you suggest to deal with that?

Mr. NATSIOS. Mr. Chairman, if I could respond? Let me just respond in terms of the question of the agricultural budget for AID for Africa. It was 113 million in 2001. It is 163 million this year,

so \$50 million increase. Not enough, but it is a 50 percent increase over 2 years. We put more in, Mr. Chairman, and it was put in other accounts that are more popular. The money was transferred and put into HIV/AIDS, the environment, and everything that you could imagine.

The constituency in this city is not there for agriculture. You and I both support it, but generally speaking it doesn't have the constituency. And so the money we put in was taken out and was put into other accounts. I was very angry about it. If you ask African heads of states and prime ministers and finance ministers, not the agricultural ministers who have a vested interest, but the other ministers, where we should be putting money in Africa, they will all tell you, money in agriculture.

Eighty percent of poor people in Africa live on the farms. If you want to reduce poverty, you have to invest in agriculture. We will continue to put money in, but we really want support in the city to increase these budgets. In terms of the frequency of drought, we are seeing an increase—or the length of time between the droughts diminish each year. And the reason for that is there are very high rates of population growth in Ethiopia. And that means areas that are more drought prone are much more affected because they are overpopulated now and the carrying capacity of the land has diminished.

Now, if you are industrialized, it is irrelevant what happens. But Ethiopia is a rural agricultural society. And so if people are subsistence farmers, then high population growth rates in marginal lands means people are much more vulnerable to weather anomalies.

What can be done about it? The first thing that can be done, Africa has the lowest rate in the world of irrigated agriculture. India is now at 70 or 80 percent—70 or 80 percent of their agriculture is irrigated. They radically increased that after independence, this effort to do that. In fact, in drought years in India, they fed the peasantry and used food for work to build rural roads, number one; and two, to irrigate the agricultural system. So they have used famine or droughts. They have not had a famine since independence in India.

And that, I think, needs to be a lesson to us in Africa, particularly in Ethiopia where we should use the droughts as a way of taking the labor of the farmers by giving them food aid to build rural roads to increase access for farmer-to-market roads; but two, to irrigate the agricultural system so that you are less vulnerable when these emergencies take place. And there are some things we could do in irrigation.

The second thing is, I think one of the things we need to invest in, this is a decision that the Ethiopian Government has to make, not us. But there are new varieties of crops being developed through biotech in South Africa. These are not American varieties. American varieties are appropriate for our agricultural system, not for Africa.

I had lunch—dinner last August with some brilliant South African scientists who are developing some drought-resistant forms of maize and wheat, and they are extremely promising and they may in fact insulate agriculture in Africa against periodic drought.

So we are looking to scientific solutions and technical solutions that are simple but are appropriate for Africa to deal with the onset of drought, but using science.

We also need to educate another generation of scientists, African scientists in their ministries of agriculture, in their universities, to do the research for what is appropriate for the agricultural system. We used to do 20,000 scholarships a year in 1980. We only do 900 now. I think it is scandalous that there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of scholarships to people from the Third World to American universities to take that technology back to their countries and use it for their own benefit. So we are putting a new investment into scholarships in the United States.

I have to tell you this one story. I was at the World Food Summit with Alan Larson in June of last year, and this man came up to me from Guatemala and he said, "I am the Minister of Agriculture in Guatemala" and I thought he was going, and he said, "I want to thank you and AID because I got my degree from an AID scholarship and I was a member of your staff in the AID mission for many years, and because I developed such good skills I get promoted to be the Minister of Agriculture."

So the scholarship programs work and capacity programs work, but it takes years to see them in people who get promoted to senior positions. So there are things that we can do in terms of science and technology, investment in infrastructure and small-scale irrigation. Big-scale irrigation has not worked well in Africa, but small-scale irrigation has, and we believe that is one of the answers that we need to invest in.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you. My time has expired, and I just want to say I appreciate and it is very clear that you have thought about this a lot and am very passionate. I do want to wonder about—and I won't ask a question, but I am concerned about the food being delivered through the port of Djibouti, which is one of the ways, and now because of the engagement in Iraq, and I know a lot of military is going through that area. So I just hope that the cost of insurance and other dangers don't impact on our being able to get food distributed to that area.

Secondly, I just would like to comment that I do think, Dr. Mesfin, that there has to be reform in what is going on in Ethiopia, as you said, with extortion and illegal activities. It should end. And we will certainly make that point to the government.

We had a problem in our country years ago. It wasn't extortion but in the twenties, bankers came in and took the mortgages of our farmers, and many of them lost their farms and we kind of reformed the program. So we got better at it and we don't do it anymore. So maybe we need to work with the government there so maybe they can transform and get back on the right track.

I guess with that, I have to yield back because I have no more time.

Mr. ROYCE. I have an announcement to make. Secretary Larson, I understand, must leave. And Secretary Larson, we may have a few questions for you for the record from the Committee, which we will submit to you, but we thank you for your presentation and we are now going to go to Mr. Houghton for his questions.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. Well, it is good to see you all here, particularly Madam Ambassador. Is that what you are still called, Ambassador? Commissioner, Director, Holiness? Well anyway, it is wonderful to be here with you.

Well, I think the whole issue is how do we help? And there are so many issues here, whether they are political or economic or medical or what. And so in terms of trying to put these in some sort of proportion and put the priorities on the scale, if there was one thing—there is more than one thing, but if there was one absolute important thing we should do right now, I would be interested in knowing what it is so we can gather up ourselves and work toward this. What would you say?

Ms. SISULU. Well, I think with regards to Eritrea and Ethiopia, from my perspective in the World Food Programme right now, we need additional resources to save lives. If we do not—

Mr. HOUGHTON. You had said, excuse me, you had said that you are only getting about 50 percent of your requirements?

Ms. SISULU. We get 50 percent of the fortified foods for treating malnutrition. We got 70 percent of food that we need that will take us up to August to feed people who do not have food. We do not have the food to take us through to the end of the year. The danger of not having that food—because we can't wait until August, and if we wait until August and the crop has failed, the food has got to be already in the country. We cannot begin then to bring the food in. And the problem is because we have people, as I said in my testimony, that we are already giving less rations than they should be getting, 12 kilograms per month as opposed to 15, which means they are really on the borderline. So if we do not get the food that we need to take us through the end of the year, we might see the whole success of intervening at the right time unravel, may actually see those deaths that we have been able to avert.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Natsios, so you have heard this before and you understand the dimensions of this thing. Obviously it doesn't rest entirely in the United States. It rests with the governments themselves. I mean, are those supplies available?

Mr. NATSIOS. Let me just say overall, we are at 72 percent of what we need for the famine response. So total contributions have been 72 percent of what the total need is according to the Ethiopian Government. So we are well on our way toward meeting the requirement. The specific thing that Ambassador Sisulu is talking about is a smaller portion of the food basket which is corn soy blend, which we mix with oil for children who are acutely malnourished. We actually were the first donors to give that food to WFP and we recently diverted a ship that was going somewhere else that wasn't as necessary to Ethiopia, at the request of WFP, to provide that corn and soy blend. It has not arrived yet, but it will shortly.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Anyway, you feel you can move from 72 percent up to what, with what you know and have available?

Mr. NATSIOS. We have given 715,000 tons.

Mr. HOUGHTON. I just don't mean the United States but the whole world.

Mr. NATSIOS. We have had meetings with our European counterparts and I have talked to our Canadian friends and the AID agen-

cy about whether we could beef up, because we are doing as much as the world combined, and I think other countries need to step up to the plate. It used to be we give a third, the Europeans would give a third, and the Canadians would give 20 percent, and the rest would be done by the rest of the world. That has now changed, and we are doing 50 to 60 percent in many famine responses. And I think there needs to be a balance here. But we will give what is necessary to stop this from getting out of control.

Mr. HOUGHTON. If that happens then you are relatively happy, not totally. Now what is the next thing?

Ms. SISULU. The next thing is ensuring that people receive food aid and other kind of assistance will enable people in drought-prone areas to be able to cope with these short cycles of drought, when they arrive, through development; development that is broad, socioeconomic. And also, as I think we have to encourage governments. And I must say the Government of Ethiopia has been very cooperative with us in this regard, but to encourage them to work with the international community in putting on the ground assets and resources that will ensure that when—and we know that the droughts are going to come, they are no longer unpredictable—when they do come, that the people have themselves assets and capacity to withstand the impact for a little longer, while the international community rallies around. And hopefully, that in the long term, people—as Mr. Natsios said, when there are droughts there does not have to be a famine—that one day people will get to the point through development where they will not need international assistance.

Mr. HOUGHTON. I don't know whether my time is up. I won't ask any more questions.

Mr. NATSIOS. Could I add one comment, though, just to endorse what Dr. Mesfin said about the private ownership of property? The Ethiopian Government is resisting the notion of giving peasants their land. They are not investing in their land. They tell us that in the villages: We are not going to fix this land up because it is not ours. It belongs to the State. Unless we own the land and have title to it, we are not going to invest in it.

The private ownership of land is a policy change that would make a difference in terms of people investing in their own property. Some of them will sell their land, but some plots are so small they can't sustain a family anyway. And it increases the efficiency of the agricultural system if the farms are a little larger. So that is a reform they can make. They can liberalize their capital; in other words, have a floating currency so it is easier to trade with neighboring countries and move down trade barriers. And that makes a big difference in terms of moving surplus around.

And third, if they liberalize their banking system and allow international banks to come in, they can have more capital for investment in the economy. But they are reluctant to do that as well.

So those are reforms they have the capacity to do on their own which they have done not done so far. We encourage them to do that.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you. On that subject, Hernando DeSoto's book *The Mystery of Capital*, explaining why land title is so important, is one of the best selling books in the developing world. And I have

talked to a number of ministers overseas on my trips about that work, and it proves the point that you are advocating here in terms of Ethiopia's movement to a system where land title could actually be held and transferred and the consequences of that.

Mr. NATSIOS. We have been a supporter of Hernando DeSoto's institute for 20 years in AID.

Mr. ROYCE. I appreciate that effort because I think he is on the right track. We want to go to Congresswoman McCollum from Minnesota.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think what I will do I is, have a couple of questions and I will go through them briefly. And then as time permits, if the panel would answer them, and if time does not permit, if you could share the information back with myself and the Committee. There has been quite a bit of discussion in the last round of questioning dealing with Ethiopia. I am concerned that we haven't spoken as much about what is actually going on in Eritrea, and that it sounds to me and looks to me from reading the statistics in here that Eritrea is lagging behind Ethiopia not only in pledges but in food on the ground.

I have a concern—Congressman Payne and I serve on the Education Committee—with what is going on with foreign students. As you mentioned, the foreign student exchange program and educating farmers and that. We have a backlog. We have problems right now with getting foreign students into the country with the way foreign students—some of the colleges, with what is going on with that whole—it is a mess. It is a mess right now with what is going on with foreign students, what is going on with some of the colleges and some of the colleges' willingness in the future to be dealing with a Department of Homeland Security and the INS with possible sanctions against them for not following rules that seem to change minute by minute and computer systems that don't work.

So if you are aware of that, you should be. If you are not—if you are experiencing problems, I know those of us on the Education Committee would very much like to be of assistance in this area to see what we could do.

To Dr. Butler in particular, you talked about biotech. There has been discussion about some of the crops being developed in South Africa being specific to the continent of Africa. But I have heard that right now, we have manufacturers with our chemical fertilizers and with our seeds that go in with seeds, and then the farmer has to have the right fertilizer to go with the seed, and that is expensive and that in some ways is contributing to some of the problem farmers have with being able to afford crops and sustainability. The seeds in many cases cannot be harvested and sowed into the ground. In other words, you have to repurchase new. That makes it very expensive and we need to be at a sustainable agricultural order.

The other question I have, with all the irrigation I am hearing about and irrigation is a wonderful thing, but is irrigation—how long is it going to be sustainable? I mean we have irrigation right here in the United States in California, Arizona, and other parts of the West, and other people are literally fighting over water because water also goes through cycles.

And so, Mr. Chair, those are my questions, and with that I will be quiet. And as many people that can answer, I would be very excited to hear what they have to say.

Mr. SMITH OF MICHIGAN. [Presiding.] Any comments from the witnesses? I think it was a good statement. I would like to follow a little bit on the—where we go with new seed varieties, either through conventional cross-breeding and hybrids, or whether we look at the new biotechnology. I mean, there are several reasons for famines. I mean, there is the corruption and the distribution of food. There is weather that can hamper even the good biotech varieties. But it would seem from everything that I have examined and as Chairman of the Research Subcommittee on Science, we held three hearings on biotechnology and the safety and the possibility of assisting not only this country, but especially developing countries with the kind of varieties that can better acclimate to those soils and those climates.

You know, we have made mistakes over the years—before I ask my questions in terms of going into a country and helping with child mortality and health care that further complicated some of the problems on starvation and famine. And so one of my questions is how do we look at the coordination of what seems to be good deeds that might further complicate the long-term survival of a particular country? And it seems to me that it is logical to look at the long-term solutions and make sure that the short-term solutions of adding better health care, more antibiotics, food for the short run that might not be there in the long run, it would seem to me there is an advantage to look at the long run.

And I guess my question may be to you, Mr. Natsios, is what—or maybe get everybody's interpretation and impression—what would it take for African countries to start accepting biotech seed food products?

Mr. NATSIOS. Let me first say that some countries in Africa, South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya are already—9 percent of their corn is biotech. It is South African Biotech varieties, and they just experimented successfully with a new kind of white corn, which is more popular in southern Africa than yellow corn is. It is very popular. This is for poor farmers, not just for the big commercial farmers. And Kenya and Nigeria are moving very rapidly toward the development of indigenous capacity to use biotech to develop seed varieties that are appropriate for their country.

AID has been supporting for 35 years the preeminent set of—and it is called the CGIAR network, the Consultive Group on International Agricultural Research. It is a subsidiary, kind of independent from the World Bank, but it was formed in the sixties to do improved seed varieties. There are 16 of these different institutes around the world to develop these varieties, and we are the largest donor and continue to be a very big supporter of theirs.

The question has always been getting the technology they developed out to the small farmers. The big farmers get it, but the small farmers don't. And so we have engaged over the last decade at AID in getting this to the NGOs that work with the smaller farmers in the rural areas to get this improved seed variety out to them, too. One of the things we did in Uganda—it is a wonderful story—there was a terrible disease—

Mr. SMITH OF MICHIGAN. I want you to remember my question, too. What is it going to take for the other African countries. I mean, is it partially the nervousness that seems to exist with Europe and Great Britain saying we are not going to import your products if you contaminate it with biotech, or is it the countries themselves that are nervous about either potential health problems or environmental concerns?

Mr. NATSIOS. I think we have exaggerated the opposition in Africa because of what happened in Zimbabwe and Zambia. Malawi made a decision to allow all biotech food from the United States in. I met with the President. He said bring it in. If they won't take it in Zimbabwe, we will take it. Mugabe didn't say there was a health problem. He just didn't want the seed being planted, which I thought was a specious argument. Peasants who are hungry don't take food aid and plant it. They eat. He politicized it and that spread into a couple of countries. The great bulk of African agricultural ministers, presidents and prime ministers I have spoken with are all interested in bringing this technology to their agricultural system. So there is not widespread opposition in Africa. That is an illusion.

Mr. SMITH OF MICHIGAN. Dr. Mesfin and Dr. Butler, if I could get each one of your comments. In my H.R. 4664, which was the National Science Foundation bill that was signed into law last December, we actually put in provisions where the United States scientists would accommodate and pay for cooperative research with African researchers and scientists for them to decide what kind of a product they want to try to develop, and then work with them and help pay for that effort.

Dr. Mesfin, any comments that you might have? And then, briefly, Dr. Butler.

Mr. MESFIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to say something that I know and I think perhaps you should inquire about this. In the sixties, the United States built in the eastern part of Ethiopia a very modern agricultural college. It is almost a piece of America, put there with the cooperation of Oklahoma State University. It really was a fantastic university and it has all sorts of agricultural scientists being taught there. It has been developed to be a top-notch agricultural institution in Africa.

Now, there isn't a single one of the senior graduates of this college in Ethiopia, not a single one. You will find them in Asia, America, Europe, all over the Pacific, doing all sorts of jobs in their fields in all sorts of organizations, FAO and others, but not in Ethiopia because Ethiopia is not a fertile ground for scientists, for academics who can do work independently. And this is why the connection, the research connection between Oklahoma and various scientists, agricultural scientists, was almost broken when that—now it is a university, but it is only a shadow of what it was once.

Mr. SMITH OF MICHIGAN. Thank you. And, Doctor Butler.

Mr. BUTLER. Obviously the system they developed in these countries needs to be based on sound science in which I am sure you can concur. They have to develop a regulatory system that will have consumer confidence. So the regulatory system with regard to biotech needs to be linked with a marketing system, needs to be linked with consumer confidence through education.

Mr. SMITH OF MICHIGAN. It seems—we are approaching almost a decade that Americans have been consuming biotech products, so it seems like that would be a little indication that it might cause obesity, I don't know—strike that from the record. Mr. Weller, would you consider presiding for your final statement?

Mr. WELLER. Well, Mr. Chairman, as soon—I have a meeting as well. As soon as I am done with my question, then I can preside from here.

But I do want to thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can tell that my friend Chairman Smith and I are both the farmers in the group here, with the line of questioning we had. And as a new Member of this Committee, of course, I patiently waited my turn to ask a question. And I want to thank the panelists for the important information that you have been sharing today, and particularly my colleague, Mr. Wolf, for, frankly, the very heartbreaking images that he shared with us, really illustrating the importance of the issue we have before us today.

As you know, I grew up on a family farm, I like Mr. Smith. And for five generations my family has raised pure bred hogs and, of course, corn and soybeans as well.

And I grew up seeing what—the benefits of what we used to call animal husbandry, and the development of hybrid varieties of corn and beans and other food crops, which of course have doubled if not tripled the production and capability of our American farms.

So, it is—you know for me I have been very frustrated when I have seen some of our friends, particularly in Europe, certain countries have, who because of their commercial and trade interests, have enlisted the assistance of certain individuals and organizations to, as Dr. Butler pointed out, disseminate false propaganda, false information, on the food products that used to come from what we used to call hybrid corn. Now today it is called biotechnology or for those who wish to taint American food products, they use the term GMO, or genetically modified organisms.

That is a shame, because not only do we see these images in Africa which are heartbreaking, but I also think that the intent of some of these countries to enlist these organizations frankly is heartless, because they are advancing their commercial interests, while thousands if not millions are starving.

So I think that is a great shame. I think the example, and I am just going to direct my question, because we are limited on time, to Dr. Butler. And I want to thank everyone for your time this morning.

But, Dr. Butler, in your testimony you really illustrated this frustration. And of course this was not seed corn, for example, being sent over there to plant, this was corn being sent there to be eaten.

And, of course, Africans were told that it was dangerous, they shouldn't touch it. And, of course, many were afraid to consume American food products as a result of this propaganda campaign. And I was wondering, can you share with us some examples for the record of attempts to of course misinform Africans, but also what the results were as a result of that campaign?

Mr. BUTLER. I don't have a specific example of misinformation, but I can site examples of coordination between our agency at

USAID and AID conducting in-country seminars, the classic extension model. Based on your background, you are obviously familiar with that of what we have done in the United States. Taking our professionals, our scientists, meeting with farmers in small communities, talking to them about the science of this, the cultural practices of planting, harvesting, marketing. So it is those outreach efforts that we have extended into these countries that are quite similar to what we have experienced in the United States for many years.

Mr. NATSIOS. If I could, I have got three examples I can give you from my trip. I was appealed by it. One of the ministers of a very close country to us, he just told me the story, he said he didn't agree with it, but this is what people were spreading, Europeans I might add. In a Muslim of this country, that the United States had taken pig genes, of course Muslims do not eat pork, pig genes and cross-bred it with corn.

And I said there is no kind of animal genes of any kind in any of our corn, that is ridiculous. He said, I know it is ridiculous, but tell it to the peasantry. That is what they are spreading, these groups from Europe that are running around scaring people. I have never seen such outrageous and irresponsible behavior by institutions that say they are in favor of poor people. They are doing enormous damage to poor people in Africa by those rumors.

Second rumor, that the corn will cross-breed with your vegetables. Well, it is genetically impossible for corn to cross-pollinate with another variety other than corn. Corn cross-pollinates with itself. You can't take pollination from corn and cross with an apple tree or with vegetables or tomatoes. That is not how it works genetically, it can't happen. So that is another lie that was being spread in one of the villages.

The President of Zambia was told by one of those groups that this was poison food, rejected by Americans who would never eat it. I said, President Bush, the United States Senate, the United States Congress all eat Corn Flakes. And all of our Corn Flakes have biotech corn in them, because it is commingled in our agricultural system. We all eat it. We have been eating it for 7 years and none of us are sick.

There hasn't been one single lawsuit, and we are an extremely litigious society in the United States. It is not poisoned. And the African Academy of Scientists, which is like our National Academy of Science but for Africa, said there is no health risk to biotech foods, and they said it themselves, not just us.

So these are scare tactics that are designed to frighten people. Their head of state actually said it was poisoned in the middle of a drought that was affecting people's lives. There were riots in some villages saying, we will eat it anyway because we are starving. Give us the food, let us poison ourselves. And they actually went in and looted some of the WFP warehouses because the food was not being distributed, even though it was sitting there in the warehouses.

Mr. WELLER. Well, thank you. That is so important to illustrate that. I think it is very, very unfortunate. We have a lot of friends in Europe, but they are also our competitors. I think we need to call it for what it is, and this campaign to distribute and misinform

citizens of Africa with false information and scare tactics is clearly part of a—it is a trade effort. These countries want to raise trade barriers against American food products in Europe.

And of course they have spread this campaign to Africa, because they then in turn want to ship their food products and eventually sell it to Africa some day. I think we need call it for what it is, but I also appreciate your efforts in, of course, providing the corrective information we have, and of course we in the Congress need to continue working our dialogue with our European friends to convince them that the people that are truly being hurt are the starving Africans and those who are losing their lives.

So thank you for your testimony this morning. It has been a very helpful hearing.

Mr. PAYNE. [Presiding.] Thank you very much. I think that our time has been exhausted. I would like to thank the panelists for coming. I would just like to say that I do hope that we can see support from other countries around the world.

I will be, through the Chairman, Mr. Hyde, pressing our European allies to increase theirs. Would just like to indicate that I think that we ought to look at the system of land ownership.

However, if people's income have dropped 25 percent from \$170 a year to \$100s a year, I am not so sure how much private investment could go into that land. Maybe an incentive to do more. And I am not saying that state-run land is the best. As a matter of fact, I think that our system of free enterprise is best. However, there are places like Tanzania where government-owned land had productive results. And we don't want to look at the wrong reasons for the lack of productivity.

I think abject poverty is something that is never mentioned, but I don't know what you do and how you live with a family of four on \$100 a year, even if you owned your property.

And with that, I would like to say that the record will—oh, the final thing I wanted to say is that I would hope that representatives from Ethiopia that may be here would make it pretty clear that we are hoping that the Government of Ethiopia will abide by the rulings of the Border Arbitration Commission that have come up with a determination. The reason you go to arbitration is when there are two views, you bring in an impartial third party, and they then make a resolution.

Usually, when a resolution is made, one side doesn't like it and one side does. However, the reason you use impartial arbiters is so that it can be done unbiased. I would just want to let it be known by me as the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Africa that we would be shocked and disturbed and outraged if there is any attempt to have tinkering with the Border.

Again, we are going to push to get food assistance and other assistance to Ethiopia. I think they need more than food assistance. I think, as we have heard, they need agricultural assistance, they need USAID to help build roads so that they can get food out to places when it is produced. There is a lot of things. We need to alleviate poverty. And that is a big broad spectrum.

But I do want to make it pretty clear that we will not tolerate the rejection of the Border Arbitration Commission.

The record will remain open for 5 days. With that, I will adjourn the meeting. Thank you.
[Whereupon, at 12:25 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE NICK SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

I want to thank Chairman Hyde for holding this hearing today about East African famine and food aid. I would also like to thank our colleague, Chairman Wolf, representatives of the Administration, and the representative of the United Nations for taking the time to share their experiences with us on these issues.

When we look at the famines of Africa, we have to ask two questions. What are the structural causes of the famines? And how can we alleviate them? We know that, in addition to whether, the lack of food is often caused by war, corruption, tyranny, and government mismanagement.

On the Horn of Africa, the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments have been unable to prevent famine. They have been at war for 30 years, and Ethiopia has only begun to reform its economy since the Communist government fell in 1991. Almost all land is still owned by the state, including the coffee plantations, Ethiopia's only export. To handle the crisis, the United States has been providing over half of all the world's donated food.

In Southern Africa, governments have made all the mistakes of the Horn, and then some. While their people starve, governments have raised barriers against free food from American farmers. Zambia declined 63,000 tons of our corn, because some of that corn was from a variety improved through biotechnology. These policies are based in fears that the EU might refuse food shipments from developing African countries if there were indications of genetic modification.

While some leaders of African nations refuse free food, the people and the governments of East Africa have embraced the promise of biotechnology. No East African country has refused American food aid. Kenya is even leading the way with research programs in biotech sweet potatoes and cassava. The biotech varieties of these staples are more drought and disease resistant. Through agricultural research, the countries of East Africa are lowering the risk of famine by changing the ecological equation. Kenya has also completed a relatively smooth, democratic transition of power, and initial steps indicate that the new government is working actively to reduce corruption and more equitable distribute food.

These examples illustrate the problems that we face, but also the sources for hope. But to further promote advances we must co-operate to find new food varieties that can grow in these areas and provide more nutrition. Science should be used to confirm the safety to health and environment of these new varieties, whether from traditional breeding or from biotechnology. My NSF bill, H.R. 4664, signed into law last December, included provisions to bring African and American scientists together to develop new biotech seed varieties that could best help those countries. And, in the end, real progress can only be achieved in partnership with transparent governments that respect the rule of law.

Again, I would like to thank Chairman Hyde for holding this important hearing. For Africa, there really are seeds of hope, but care will be needed to let them bloom.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE BARBARA LEE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

I would like to thank the Chair, Congressman Hyde and Ranking Member Lantos for holding this important full committee hearing on food security in East Africa. I also want to thank our esteemed panelist for appearing here today.

As we all know, food production in Africa has fallen behind population growth over the past 30 years. Ironically leaving Africa, an agriculturally rich continent, as a net importer of food. Political evolution, industrialization, reduction in land use, climate change, HIV/AIDS, and several other factors contribute to the challenge we face: eradicating Africa's current famine crisis and stabilizing the social sectors that have crumbled as a result of the crisis.

Although the United States remains the largest single contributor to the World Food Program, donating \$917 million dollars worth of food to various WFP operations around the world—the last three years have actually seen drops by at least a third from 15 million to 10 million metric tons of food.

The reality is: emergency food aid needs are up and food aid assistance is down. I had hoped that the President would include desperately needed food assistance funding in his recent Supplemental Appropriation to Congress, but because it was excluded, I do hope that Africa, our long-time global ally and friend, will not be forgotten as we fund Operation Iraqi Freedom and the rebuilding process in Iraq.

Today we will talk about the war on hunger and what must happen to curtail this crisis. We must listen to *Africans* and what the social and economic challenges are in each country as a result of food insecurity. One of the largest social issue relating to famine from *my* perspective is HIV/AIDS throughout the country. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has exacerbated the food crisis. In some of the countries most affected by hunger, rates of HIV/AIDS prevalence are as high as 38 percent of the population, with further reaching effects on other health issues, education, and productivity throughout society.

As we combat the AIDS virus: we must look at the important component nutrition plays. Let's put this in perspective; when we are prescribed to take aspirin we instructed to take it with water and food. Imagine being an African taking drugs for the AIDS virus on an empty stomach. The toxicity alone is harmful, but these drugs on an empty stomach is dangerous. This is one of the reasons why battling the food crisis is critical to the United States' campaign to stop the Global HIV/AIDS pandemic.

In closing, I would like to reiterate the words of Secretary Powell given just a few weekends ago as he spoke to reporters regarding food security in North Korea, ". . . *But to go back on our solid policy is that we don't use food as a political weapon. You go through all the politics; there are kids out there that are starving. If we can help them, we will.*"

I agree with Secretary Powell, food is our weapon to combat the rising hunger in Africa—and we must address this issue now. Africa needs our *help* and we must deliver.

Thank you, and I imagine that the witnesses today will reiterate my concerns.



UNITED STATES MISSION
TO THE
UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
Rome, Italy

February 28, 2003

The Honorable
Henry Hyde
U.S. House of Representatives
2110 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0539

Dear Congressman Hyde:

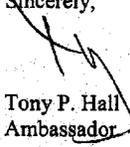
I have just returned from my trip to Ethiopia with USAID Assistant Administrator Roger Winter. Attached is my trip report. It is also posted on the website:
<http://www.usembassy.it/usunrome/files/ethiopia.htm>

As you can see, the situation in Ethiopia is extremely critical. Unless we act quickly to reverse the negative image that Ethiopia has in the outside world, the country will face the catastrophic consequences of 1984/5.

I look forward to your comments and support.

God Bless.

Sincerely,


Tony P. Hall
Ambassador

Enc: a/s

The Threat of Famine in Ethiopia

Report from Ambassador Tony P. Hall
February 15-21, 2003

*"It's even worse than I expected.
Ethiopia is once again faced with the threat of famine."*

Summary

A team led by Ambassador Tony Hall and USAID's Assistant Administrator Roger Winter visited Ethiopia February 15-21 and found the country with the second largest population in sub-Saharan Africa struggling to contain a major humanitarian disaster. In 2003, 11.3 million victims of drought will require about 1.4 million tons of food assistance and an additional 3 million people will need to be closely monitored. With 20 percent of Ethiopia's population at risk, unless deftly handled, 2003 could well become a crisis of similar magnitude to the catastrophe of 1984 when one million people died. Given the depth and wide geographic spread of the hunger, greater leadership and involvement of the United Nations at the country level is required. And donors need to be seized with a heightened sense of urgency.

The scenes at feeding sites were ones of despair and tragedy. Mothers had nothing to offer their hungry children. Children who should have been playing had no energy to even move. Senior citizens looked decades older than they actually were.

Background



"Take a good look at us –
We're not going to be around in three
months."

*A Woman's response during a nutrition
assessment in Harage*

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Agencies on Food and Agriculture Tony Hall, USAID's Assistant Administrator for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Roger Winter, and USAID staff visited Ethiopia February 15-21. In addition to meetings in Addis Ababa with U.S. Embassy/USAID, United Nations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Government of Ethiopia functionaries, the team spent several days in rural areas reviewing World Food Program (WFP) and NGO immediate relief and longer-term operations.

Ethiopia has the second largest population in sub-Saharan Africa and an annual per capita income of only U.S. 100 dollars. The country is once again faced with the threat of famine. In 2003, some 11.3 million victims of drought will require about 1.3 million tons of food grains and 125,000 metric tons of enriched foods. An additional 3 million potentially at-risk will need to be closely monitored. *"It is even worse than I expected. There is a tremendous amount of malnutrition, and I am numbed by the sheer numbers of acutely malnourished children. I was the first Member of Congress to travel in the rural Ethiopian highlands in 1984 and half a dozen times since then. I never thought I would see it as bad as during the Great Famine of 1984-85. Fortunately, now the government is helping the relief efforts, not hindering them."* Ambassador Hall

Securing a sustainable supply of food for its people has been a priority of the Ethiopian government and donors for 20 years. Despite good efforts, food insecurity remains the country's most deep-rooted problem. The catastrophic famine of 1984-85 was followed by serious food shortages in 1992, 1994, 2000 and 2002. Of the country's 67.2 million inhabitants, almost half – 28 million – live in deep and long-term poverty, and are vulnerable to drought, acute malnutrition and even, at extreme moments, to starvation. A November 2002 multi-agency pre-harvest assessment confirmed widespread crop failures in lowland areas in the north, east, south and central parts of the country. Some midland areas are also badly affected. A number of traditional surplus-producing areas of the country have also been adversely affected, reducing overall national food availability.

Overall, the food security situation both in the cropping and pastoral areas is poor. Recourse to markets is limited because of low or lack of purchasing power and cereal price hikes (up 20-30 percent in many areas compared with a year ago) – and falling livestock prices. And it is evident that the 2000 and 2002 droughts had for many a withering impact on household assets.



What the team saw

Ambassador Hall and USAID Humanitarian Attaché Tim Lavelle traveled to the East Shewa zone (Nazareth), two hours east of the capital of Addis Ababa, and reviewed WFP-supported food-for-assets creation and protection. WFP, working through the Ministry of Agriculture, is successfully promoting activities at the community level focused on building skills and infrastructure (ponds, gully control, reforestation, etc) through public works supported by food assistance. Drought-related general distributions were also observed. It seems that too little investment has been made in irrigation or other systems to manage water supply – only about 5 percent of Ethiopia's potentially irrigable land is presently irrigated.

The entire team visited the Southern Nations and Nationalities, Peoples Region (SNNPR) with the Government of Ethiopia's Commissioner for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness (DPPC) and reviewed activities of World Vision, the Irish-NGO Project Concern and an Ethiopian non-governmental organization, Project Mercy. These NGOs are performing in a truly exemplary manner in identifying gaps and providing support where government services are weak or unadapted to local needs. They are powerful instruments in promoting people's participation in development and giving a voice to the poor. And while they are committed to working with and strengthening the capacity of local government, it was gratifying to see that the Ethiopian Government, at different levels, is increasingly recognizing NGOs as an important development force and partner. World Vision's own 2003 planned contribution for relief and development to Ethiopia is a truly impressive U.S. 17 million dollars.

The "investments" of World Vision and like-minded NGOs and donors in the enhancement of people's livelihoods and the development of rural infrastructure can, if planned well, go hand-in-hand with the delivery of life-saving food aid. The projects that we saw amply demonstrated that it is possible to build a platform from which people can, with complementary development interventions, graduate out of emergency relief.

Meeting with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi

Regarding the drought, the Prime Minister thanked the team and stated that the US government assistance was early, saved lives and, without it, mortality rates would have been higher. Despite resource problems, the Prime Minister stated that we are grateful and has no reason to complain. With regard to USAID, the shift to agriculture and the famine prevention initiative are welcome and timely for Ethiopia. We look forward to improving the development use of food aid in Ethiopia.

The Prime Minister stated that one of the problems is that the current focus is on emergency response, and when the emergency is over, we are back to business as usual – struggling to mobilize basic resource for development. Emergency response without development feeds the other and the cycle continues with a potential that the next crisis could require a response for 20 million people in need.

Project Mercy – An Oasis in the Desert – "Each face beams with hope"

Project Mercy, started in 1977 by an Ethiopian refugee couple (Marta Gabre-Tsadick and Demme Tekle-Wold) is a Fort Wayne, Indiana registered NGO which ministers to the physical and spiritual needs of African refugees. In Ytebon (Gurague Zone, SNNPR), Project Mercy is focused on health, agriculture, education and vocational training of the local population. To date, Project Mercy's activities in Ytebon (1993-present) have been funded at a level of U.S. dollars 4.43 million, exclusively by private U.S. donations. Impelled by the failed rains in this above-average food-producing zone, Project Mercy has now embarked on an extensive health and nutrition outreach program to more than 200,000 people in eight woredas (districts) of the southern region. Marta told our team: "we desperately need to focus on the malnutrition of children."

"They are one of the best all-around development projects that I have seen throughout the world. They address all of the needs people have and are able to respond in a crisis like this. Project Mercy has an excellent school feeding program, complete with a school garden. They have a hospital and excellent teachers and doctors. Additionally, they run skills training workshops, agriculture extension and animal husbandry programs and microenterprise efforts."
Ambassador Hall

The threat of HIV/AIDS – "Inherit the whirlwind"

Today, Ethiopia has the third largest number of HIV/AIDS positive people in the world – over 2.2 million affected, 250,000 are children under-five and there are an estimated one million HIV/AIDS orphans. The team was informed that the present devastating drought will only spiral these numbers upwards as drought victims increasingly migrate to urban areas, even if only temporarily. In a country where potential health service coverage hovers around 50 percent, combating the spread of HIV/AIDS has to be taken on board at all levels (Government, UN, NGOs, civil society) as a fundamental challenge that is poised to wipe out the last two decades of development. A Project Mercy doctor who traveled to a Catholic Church-run hospital in the valley beyond the Ytebon hill informed that the majority of beds there were filled with AIDS patients. Ambassador Hall interviewed a young married woman at a Project Concern food distribution site. ***"Have you and your husband discussed HIV/AIDS?" "Yes, we have talked about it." "Do you know what causes it and how it can be prevented?" "No, I do not."***



Ambassador Hall and USAID Assistant Administrator Winter announced a new 'non-food' contribution to the emergency in Ethiopia, worth US\$ 7.2 million. The assistance will be used for water and sanitation, seeds and agriculture rehabilitation, and primary health care and nutrition. **An additional food contribution of 27,000 MT, valued at approximately US\$ 12.2 million, was also announced.**

Conclusions and recommendations

1) While the United States (with a commitment to date of 289,000 tons) has responded generously to the 2003 joint Government of Ethiopia/UN food aid appeal for 1.44 million metric tons, given the gravity of the present situation, a further commitment of 300,000 tons in grains and blended foods is strongly recommended. Surveys in the Amhara, Oromia and Somali regions presently record global acute malnutrition of around 15 percent, which is in the crisis range by international standards. The height of the "hunger season" will occur in the April through June period. A woman at a food distribution site told Ambassador Hall: "I leave the house early every morning because I can't face my children with the truth that we have barely enough food to eat once a day."

2) Greater leadership and involvement of the United Nations at the country level is required. In particular the UN should:

- name a special envoy to focus on improving the efficiency and overall effectiveness of UN operations in responding to the present drought in both Ethiopia and Eritrea;
- prioritize assistance to the establishment of a nationwide nutrition surveillance system;
- pursue more vigorously programs that delivers a combination of services (food supplements, micro-nutrients, health inputs, immunizations, etc.) targeted to the most nutritionally disadvantaged groups in the population (e.g., infants and pregnant women);
- quickly intensify and expand activities to strengthen HIV/AIDS surveillance systems, care for orphans, and training for service providers to better manage STI/HIV/AIDS.

Specifically, the UN (and their partner NGOs) should take advantage of food deliveries (where large numbers of beneficiaries often wait for hours to receive their ration) to impart mother-child care health training and nutrition education messages. The team repeatedly heard that in this emergency, with the exception of WFP, the rest of the UN organizations in Ethiopia are not seized with a sense of urgency.

3) The Government of Ethiopia, donors and the UN need to reassess the size of the national Emergency Food Security Reserve (EFSR), which is presently 407,000 tons. Given the magnitude of recent disasters, a reserve of 650,000-750,000 tons would seem more appropriate. A larger reserve could also serve as a price-stabilization mechanism in good years. Even in non-drought years, about 5 million people simply do not have the money to buy food. Specifically, WFP is encouraged to utilize the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), a part of the CGIAR-network, to conduct a study of the historical experience of local grain purchases by donors within Ethiopia.

- 4) Ethiopia contributed 100,000 tons in emergency food assistance to the EFSR from their budget in 2000 and 45,000 tons in 2002. The Government of Ethiopia should be strongly encouraged to match its 2000 contribution in 2003.
- 5) Food for Peace Title I and/or Food for Progress bilateral options should be urgently reviewed with USDA/FAS regional agricultural attaché. A Title I contribution could be "earmarked" by the Government of Ethiopia for the EFSR as was done with USAID/Title III food assistance in 1999. In the longer-term, the government and donors need to take into account Ethiopia's structural food deficit (approximately 700,000 tons each year) and focus on improving the national capacity to import food on time to where it is needed and directly address this deficit in its development strategies.
- 6) Given the acute shortage of supplementary foods presently in country, USAID should fund the immediate purchase of blended food from Kenya and began overland shipments from Mombassa to Djibouti as soon as possible. The establishment of a short-term airlift operation using military assets should also be explored. Moreover, USAID and other donors should consider provision (via airlift) of both fortified foods (F-75 and F-100) for therapeutic feeding. UNICEF is encouraged to immediately increase its current availability of these supplements and to build up a contingency stock.
- 7) Contingency planning efforts should be explored in case the throughput of the port of Djibouti is reduced because of security issues or capacity constraints (the latter is not envisaged with the current delivery schedule). A trial shipment of some 5,000 to 10,000 tons of cereals should be dispatched through Port Sudan.
- 8) USAID/Washington should extend the duration of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) assessment team in country and consider the expansion of OFDA non-food support coverage, presently assisting 500,000 vulnerable people. Further, USAID should provide (if feasible) OFDA grant authority in country to better ensure rapid response to non-food requirements and counter-famine measures/initiatives.
- 9) USAID Ethiopia is to be lauded for reprogramming U.S. 17 million dollars in unused non-project assistance (NPA) from prior years for use in health and nutrition interventions related to the present crisis. USAID is encouraged to "scrub" further its in-country development portfolio to ensure that all possible development program "residues" have been identified.



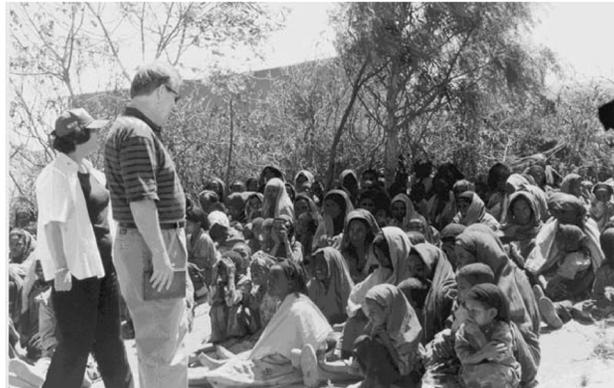
- 10) U.S. Mission to the U.N. Agencies in Rome will deepen the dialogue with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) related to intensification of FAO efforts in Ethiopia on its acknowledged areas of "comparative advantage" (soil and water conservation, SPS capacity building, reforestation, trans-boundary pests, global early warning, Rift Valley fever control, etc.).

11) There appears to be a loss of institutional memory among some donors and in certain donor capitals of just how massive and devastating was the 1984-85 famine. High-profile crises elsewhere have kept Ethiopia off the television screens. Ambassador Hall met by chance with one donor who (while admitting being unable to travel beyond Addis Ababa) assured that "the seriousness of the situation is undoubtedly exaggerated" and "the matter is well in hand." Herein lies the problem. We all need to redouble our efforts to broadcast the need for immediate action to avert imminent tragedy. As per the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) presently assessing the nutritional and contagious disease status in four Ethiopian geographic zones, the projected excess deaths over the period February-June 2003 is estimated at 32,000 excess deaths due to drought in the reviewed areas. Nationally, by the end of 2003, excess deaths could be as high as 300,000 to 500,000 people unless vigorous action is taken. This is simply not acceptable.

Ambassador Hall's Conclusion

I am saddened by the fact that Ethiopia is again threatened by a famine. The Ethiopian people are strong and gracious. But they cannot cope with a drought this severe without help. The international community needs to respond generously and quickly.

My heartfelt gratitude and thanks to Ambassador Brazeal and her staff for bringing to fruition a monument honoring the late U.S. Congressman Mickey Leland and USAID/State Department staff, both American and Ethiopian – who tragically died on a humanitarian mission to a remote area of western Ethiopia on August 7, 1989. Both Mickey and I served together for a number of years on the House Select Committee on Hunger where he worked tirelessly to make other lives better. And while Mickey traveled all over the world to assist the hungry poor, he had a special love for Ethiopia. He remains for me, and for all who knew him, a living example of the deep compassion and generosity of America.





EMBASSY OF ERITREA

1708 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE NW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20009
TEL: (202) 319-1991, Fax: (202) 319-1304

February 26, 2003

The Honorable Henry J. Hyde
Chairman
Committee on International Relations
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Hyde:

I am writing to express my appreciation to you for convening a hearing on the issue of the famine affecting the nations of Africa. This important hearing comes at a critical time for Eritrea. We are faced with the worst drought in decades, in which over 2.3 million people, out of a population of 3.5 million are in need of food assistance. We are hopeful that your committee's attention at this key juncture would result in expedited assistance to our population and to the other African nations affected by this crisis.

Eritrea is a committed ally of the United States in the war on terrorism and in other vital global issues. Since our independence in 1991, we have counted on American support and encouragement. We have sought to model our democratic development on the example established by the United States. Our commitment to these principles remain steadfast, even in the face of our current situation and regional instability. Eritrea is counting on your excellent leadership in helping to craft an American response to this unprecedented crisis.

I am hopeful that this hearing will result in increased and expedited assistance to Eritrea. We are grateful for your outstanding leadership and we look forward to the important results that should come from this hearing.

Sincerely yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Girma A. Amerom".

Girma Amerom
Ambassador

MATERIALS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY EMBASSY OF ISRAEL

THE PROBLEM

Two very worrisome trends have plagued the poorest countries of the South in recent years. On the one hand, chronic hunger and food emergencies are a growing concern. The upsurge of hunger is fueled by dislocation of vast populations due to ethnic conflict and war and an alarming process of rapid desertification caused by both climactic changes and damaging agricultural and water management policies and practices. On the other hand, donor countries are downplaying their involvement in agricultural development assistance, perhaps due to costs, past disappointments and the much longer time period needed to achieve measurable results compared to assistance in other sectors.

There is, however no other way to attain basic food security and sustainability and to alleviate dependency on food relief, than by assisting countries to achieve self-sufficiency by enhancing their basic food crop production capabilities, food storage and post harvest care. Failure to help the poorest countries of the South introduce the necessary practices, policies and preconditions for self-sufficiency can only lead to growing dependence on emergency food aid, which is very costly, logistically problematic and ultimately unsustainable.

There is no shortcut to food security. It can only be attained if we invest in the training of farmers and peasants, in water resource management and development and in the organization of support systems that can ensure the timely delivery of farm inputs, storage facilities and market outlets. The problem is not one of know-how. Advances in agricultural and environmental sciences have resulted in a revolution in crop yields in developed countries over the past few decades. These same advances can be put to work in the developing world by adapting technologies to local skills and conditions.

Israel is committed to working with the governments, scientists and farmers of the developing world in order to help them harness the know-how which enabled Israel to make its deserts bloom while increasing its agricultural production twelve-fold over the past forty years. We believe that Israel's innovative solutions in fields such as combat of desertification, water management, irrigation and agricultural extension and support systems can be of great use in helping the developing world meet the challenge of food security. Thus, over its 50 year history, MASHAV—the Center for International Cooperation of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs—has established dozens of agricultural demonstration projects in the South and has trained tens of thousands of developing world farmers and extension officers in agricultural courses in Israel and abroad. In this context, we would like to note MASHAV's very positive history of cooperation with USAID in joint agricultural development projects throughout Africa and Central Asia. This cooperation has enabled USAID to take advantage of Israel's unique experience and capabilities while allowing Israel to coordinate its policies and priorities with those of the US and to broaden the scope of its activities.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF HUNGER

Agricultural activity in the developing world ranges from low-level subsistence agriculture to improved traditional agriculture to cash-oriented agriculture. For each of these different categories of agricultural activities, solutions can be found in order to enhance productivity and reduce risk. The overall policy aim, however, should not merely be to make subsistence agriculture viable but rather to move farm populations out of subsistence to specialized market-oriented agriculture. It is Israel's belief that serious commitment of the international community to working in partnership with local governments and NGOs in order to transfer basic technologies, implement sound agricultural and environmental policies and provide necessary training and support to farmers can enable farm populations to move out of low-yield subsistence farming to high-yield market-oriented agriculture over a period of 2–3 generations. Doing so, in the long run, will help to significantly reduce dependency on food aid and will enable the developing world to provide adequate nutrition not only for its own citizens but for the world at large. The following analysis details the three basic stages in agricultural development, including what can be done at each phase to help achieve this goal.

Subsistence Agriculture

Over 45% of Africa's active rural population today, and most of its women, depend on basic subsistence agriculture for their livelihoods. However, the population explosion in the third world, in combination with worsening climactic conditions and severe soil degradation, has made methods of subsistence agriculture which have been

practiced for centuries insufficient in modern times to provide adequate nutrition for those who practice it.

There is a vicious cycle at work in subsistence agriculture: use of only the simplest of hand tools, degenerated seeds, limited cultivated areas, overgrazing and overfarming and no irrigation leads to land degradation, desertification and very low yields. This, in turn, provides insufficient nutrition for the farmer who is then fit to farm only increasingly smaller plots of land with increasingly degraded soil conditions.

As populations boom and arable land shrinks, the low yields associated with subsistence farming pose an even greater threat to food security. Nobel Laureate Prof. Norman Borlaug wrote about the worsening problem of low crop yields in subsistence farming in Asia. "Were Asia's 1961 cereal yields of kg per hectare to still prevail today, nearly 600 million hectares of additional land of the same quality would have been needed to equal the 1997 cereal harvest. Obviously, such a surplus of land was not available in Asia. Moreover, even if it were, think of the soil erosion, loss of forests, grasslands and wildlife species that would have occurred had we tried to produce these larger harvests with lower technology." The problem of low crop yields is acute among subsistence farmers, using traditional, extremely low-tech methods of farming. For example, in Latin America subsistence yields in maize are ten times as high per acre in commercial enterprises as in subsistence farmer. These problems are even more acute in Africa where we find accelerated and massive loss of soils and productivity due to drought, war and the scourge of AIDS.

A small illustration of the meaning of subsistence: One hectare of rain-fed maize production under hand implement cultivation requires about 150 labor days with a yield of only about 1 ton. A family of six persons will require approximately 1.8 tons per year of grain equivalent to survive. Therefore, even in the best of circumstances, the subsistence farmer, using only rain-fed farming, will struggle with difficulty to produce enough grain equivalent of 1.8 tons on two hectares representing an intake of about 2,200 calories per capita per day and requiring approximately 300 labor days over a six-month rainy season. In the event of drought, floods, plant pests or diseases, conflicts, wars and epidemics of chronic illness family labor availability and cultivable area can easily drive families to the brink of starvation and beyond. There is, furthermore, a clear correlation between nutrition levels and the ability to break out of a cycle of poverty. Malnourished and overworked subsistence farmers haven't the time, the resources or strength to improve their situations.

The challenge is to break the vicious circle of subsistence agriculture by devising ways of improving, first and foremost, nutritional levels in those populations. *Well-managed food-for-work programs* can tap communal labor in the off-season to implement land and water conservation projects (including terracing and mulching) as well as the development of agro-forestry systems which can help preserve and enhance soil conditions and increase yields for the subsistence farmer.

The MASHAV-supported International Program for Arid Land Crops (IPALAC) of Ben Gurion University of the Negev has developed practical and professional ways to upgrade natural resources owned by subsistence communities based on developing water-sheds, micro-catchments, protective buns (for water harvesting) and the planting of advantageous mixes and strains of crops, bushes, shrubs and trees of economic value. Use of better open-pollinated seeds in these projects can improve yields and reduce risk. The activity can be organized either as a public works program or as community based activities financed from food donations. The element of remuneration should not be food exclusively and part of the payment should be on a cash basis. Thus for instance, if a project is to be developed through the payment of food (say, 3lb wheat/adult/day), the remuneration should be supplemented by a minimum of, say, \$1/adult /day. Such a policy achieves four objectives:

1. The use of communal labor improves the natural resource base of the community.
2. It ensures sufficient daily caloric intake (ranging from 1,700 cal./day—2,200 cal./day depending on climate and food availability from other sources).
3. The modest cash remuneration becomes the first stage to introduce population into a market economy, in order to break the cycle of subsistence farming.
4. Improved seed quality and agricultural practices improve yields and lower climate-related risk.

Improved Traditional Agriculture

In the end, however, while food-for-work programs may help to meet basic needs in the first instance, the goal should be to introduce technological and methodological improvements to subsistence farming which will enable small farmers to

meet their families' basic needs. Thus, we will define a second category of agriculture in the developing world, that of "improved traditional agriculture" which in Africa, for example, represents over 30% of the farm population.

Improved traditional agriculture uses partial irrigation and better cultivation methods in order to provide higher nutrition levels to the farmer. In this category, partial irrigation can enable the farmer to produce two crops per year, utilizing the dry season. In addition, terraced and/or mulch farming, improved seed and plant material, traction animals and/or mini-tractors can be used in order to improve yields for the small farmer. With the implementation of relatively simple technologies and better methodologies, hunger can be significantly reduced, although these small farmers may still suffer from poverty and lack of basic amenities.

Israeli researchers and development organizations alike have been working to help transform traditional agriculture in semi-arid zones such as Africa's Sahel through the introduction of major technological innovations developed by Israeli scientists to combat land degradation and enable lower-risk sustainable agriculture. For example, the aforementioned IPALAC program of Ben Gurion University, in cooperation with MASHAV, has recently developed an innovative new system known as the "African Market Garden". This system uses innovative easy-to-use, very low cost and low pressure irrigation systems in order to irrigate single-household plots in arid and semi-arid regions. Using a carefully planned mix of crops, such plots, producing year-round, can yield enough produce to feed a family unit—even in conditions of scarce water resources—with a small surplus remaining for cash sale. The system has had great success in West African countries and has proven particularly effective for alleviating food insecurity of dislocated farm families that have settled informally around bigger towns. It also is of particular relevance to women farmers charged with the task of providing food security for their families.

One notable aspect of the program is the centrality of cooperation with local African NGOs and research institutes, who have been vital partners in determining optimal crop mixes for the specific region through preliminary R&D and in implementing vigorous in-situ training the NGO agricultural development officers who are responsible for disseminating this system among small farmers. Such partnerships with African institutions have proven instrumental in providing for project sustainability.

In addition, while technological improvements must provide the cornerstone of any strategy of improved traditional crop farming, this is not the only area for action. International development organizations can assist partner countries in developing effective and agricultural extension and training systems, needed credit facilities and logistical support for supplying critical inputs.

Market- and Cash-Oriented Agriculture

A significant step up from traditional farming is the market and cash-oriented sector, (involving in Africa about 14% of the active rural population). Agriculture at this level is characterized by use of irrigation, hired labor, double and multi-cropping, semi-intensive livestock husbandry, enabling a profit-based agricultural industry.

Supply to urban markets inevitably requires pre-processing facilities, such as dairy, cooling and pasteurization plants, slaughter houses, grading and chilling, grain cleaning and storage, etc. The role of government is to promote, through providing incentives to the private sector, the establishment of such facilities, which are often critical to advance policies of diversification. In addition, adequate credit facilities, which can often be provided through agricultural collectives, are of great importance.

Israel provides a good example of the process of transition between traditional and market-oriented farming. Israel entered this stage close to its independence in 1948, with the challenge to feed a growing population, including the absorption of hundreds of thousands of people, the remnants from the concentration camps in Nazi Europe and refugees from Middle East countries. The government hastily sought to provide incentives and capital to cater for the necessary components of an indicative-planned national food basket. At first, the basic components of the food basket were provided under a strict food rationing system, corresponding to an intake 2,500 calories of per adult. This policy was phased out after about six years due to the ability of Israel's developing agriculture to supply vegetables, fruits, milk derivatives and poultry products to replace imports as well as industrial crops for cash sale and export.

This diversification was attained by a combination of rural extension, farm investments, seasonal credit and water resource and irrigation systems combined with a policy of minimum price support acting as a social security net for the inexperienced farm population. There was an early realization that "know-how" is as important

as physical resources (land and water and capital). Hence, the establishment of extension (i.e. government-employed expert agricultural advisers) at the village regional and national levels.

Applied and/or adaptive research, which included extension workers and farmers themselves, made it possible to reduce the time period for introducing agro-technical innovations from the accepted period of 7 years down to 3–4 years. Another aspect of the effort to promote agricultural diversification was the introduction of innovative technologies that made it possible to produce farm products under plastic cover outside the normal season.

Agriculture cooperatives and second tier associations played an important role in ensuring the timely supply of inputs and the establishment of processing and marketing systems. This would not have happened if Israel would not have had a comprehensive, pragmatic agricultural policy entailing the establishment of regional integrated water resource programs, planned villages, rural service centres and agri-townships within functionally planned development regions.

As a result of these policies, Israel's agricultural production has increased twelve-fold over the past 40 years, despite extreme climatic and physical constraints of limited water resources and arable land. The Israeli example makes clear that by working with governments in order to establish good agricultural policies it is possible to make the transition from traditional to market-oriented agriculture.

GOVERNMENT POLICY—WHAT CAN BE DONE

In addition to the above strategies for upgrading farming in the least developed countries of the world, there are a number of policies which we believe governments may adapt in order to reduce risk and thereby reliance on outside food aid:

1. Promote the pre-positioning of emergency food supplies in vulnerable sub-regions by designing a decentralized system of food and basic service centers managed and operated by the community. Some of the elements in such service centers are:
 - An emergency food warehouse consisting of basic grains, milk and egg powder, baby food and dried vegetables. The warehouse, to the extent possible, will be continuously restocked by purchasing commodities from local farmers in "normal" years.
 - An emergency fodder supply center providing the minimum fodder requirements for body maintenance of livestock in regions of nomadic agriculture. This supply would be restocked by purchasing grain and hay in "normal" years.
 - In a selected number of basic service centers a food enrichment facility should be positioned to add protein and vitamins to grain (flour based on a minimum caloric requirement for survival) either as bread or as porridge.
 - A primary health clinic operated by trained paramedical staff operating a timely program of vaccinations and supply of basic medicines.
2. Promote a program of hygroscopic cloudseeding in vulnerable sub-regions based on some very promising rainfall results in South Africa, Israel, Mexico and the U.S.
3. Establish a pre-positioning of idle water exploration equipment based on existing geological studies to tap into existing groundwater resources for basic potable water requirements (possibly in cooperation with oil exploration companies) and the construction of small water impoundments to store run-off water. This in many cases implies the application of simple, micro-catchment engineering.
4. Strengthening of grassroots extension delivery systems to respond to specific agricultural situations (described previously) under an autonomous management system that should benefit from a set of built-in incentives, to include mobility (vehicles and their upkeep) to attain objectives of promoting food crop production.
5. Promote policies, plans and implementation of small irrigation projects either as communal gardens run by women in the community or to insure sustainable minimum crop production on family holdings.

CONCLUSIONS—A VIEW TO THE FUTURE

This statement has given an indication of the sort of measures that can be taken in order to enhance food security and combat hunger by enhancing the ability of the South's farmers to cultivate sufficient food for themselves and others. While the

policies proposed above can significantly enhance food security, the list of proposals made here is in no way exhaustive. This statement is not meant to provide all of the answers for sustainable agriculture but rather aims to make clear one very important point: *it is possible to achieve an end to hunger in the developing world* if there is a concerted effort made by the international community and the developing world itself in order to improve agricultural practices and support services. The solution is in our hands, but only if we work together to achieve it. Israel and MASHAV—its Official Development Assistance, offers its hand in partnership to the United States and the international community. We wish to join our expertise, resources and experience to those of America's in order to win the war against hunger. For years, MASHAV and USAID have been collaborating in agricultural projects throughout Africa and the developing world, made possible by Congress through an amendment to the Foreign Aid act in 1988 allocating 4 to 5 million dollars annually for joint funding under a Cooperative Development Program (CDP) for training and short and long term consultancy missions in Agriculture, Community Development, Medicine and Public Health, and Women in Development as well as the operation of agricultural demonstration projects throughout Africa. This program is about to come to an end, thereby leading to the discontinuation of all of the joint MASHAV-USAID agricultural activities in Africa. It is our sincere hope that it will be possible to renew such collaboration in the future.

Testimony for the House Committee on International Relations
April 1, 2003 Hearing on:
The U.S. Response to East African Famines and the Future Outlook for
Food Aid in Africa
Mesfin Mekonen, Ethiopian American National Congress

Dear Chairman Hyde and members of the Committee on International Relations,

I am writing on behalf of the Ethiopian American National Congress, a group that represents thousands of Ethiopians living in the United States. The Ethiopian American National Congress sincerely appreciates the time and attention your committee is devoting to the issue of famine and food aid for East Africa, particularly in light of the many other pressing global challenges facing the United States today. I would like to make a few points to put the Ethiopian famine in context and to suggest paths that could be explored as part of an effort to prevent the recurrence of famine in Ethiopia.

The international community usually associates Ethiopia with famine caused by drought. While this image is accurate – Ethiopia has suffered from several catastrophic drought-induced famines in recent decades – it is not inevitable. In fact, 85 percent of the water that flows from the Nile into the Mediterranean Sea originates in Ethiopia. Ethiopia's tragedies stem from the country's complete failure to exploit the Nile, in contrast to Egypt, which has an economy and culture centered on management of the Nile.

While U.S. food assistance is urgently required to alleviate the famine that is currently threatening Ethiopia, it would be prudent to also consider ways to help Ethiopia achieve food self-sufficiency and security on the long-run. One way to achieve this goal is to help Ethiopia with the technology, funds, and diplomatic negotiations necessary for the construction of dams, irrigation systems and hydroelectric power.

Diplomatic assistance is necessary because under current international agreements, over 74 percent of the Nile's water is reserved for Egypt, and virtually all of the remaining water is allocated to Sudan. Exploitation of the Nile could provide the economic basis for improving a range of economic and social problems in Ethiopia. Several other countries in arid regions, especially Israel, have demonstrated that irrigation can make deserts bloom.

Of course, lack of water isn't the only cause of famine in Ethiopia. The current government's policies, including its refusal to allow private ownership of land, excessive taxation of farmers, high costs for fertilizer charged by companies that are affiliated with the government, contribute to the devastation of Ethiopian agriculture.

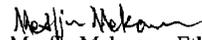
Starvation and malnutrition, which are especially hard on children, are robbing the country of its future. Sensible sustainable development of Ethiopia's Nile River resources could lay the groundwork for a renewal of Ethiopian society. It could also cement strong political and strategic ties between the U.S. and Ethiopia. Above all, it would redress historical inequities and avoid the repetition of all too regular humanitarian disasters.

While considering the acute tragedy that Ethiopia faces today, it is important to consider the need for long-term political and economic reform, and not to shy away from discussion of the root causes of the famine. The Ethiopian government hopes that it can avoid scrutiny from the U.S. and other Western countries by supporting America's war

on terror and by requesting food to prevent the famine that its own policies have created. But the U.S. should not allow the Ethiopian regime to use the war on terror as a ruse for attacking its own innocent people, and while humanitarian assistance should be granted, the U.S. should not be blinded to the causes of the famine. America should be generous but not blind, and any assistance must be carefully monitored to ensure that it gets to the people who need help and isn't merely used to prop up an illegitimate dictatorship. While it comes to the aide of the Ethiopian people, the U.S. should demand that the government enter a dialogue with the opposition movements to create conditions of freedom and democracy.

I would be happy to provide more detailed information about any of the points raised above. Please also see the attached paper by Dr. Ghelawdewos Araia, "Uprooting the Root Causes of Famine in Ethiopia."

Sincerely,



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UPROOTING THE ROOT CAUSES OF FAMINE IN ETHIOPIA
GHELAWDEWOS ARAIA
NOVEMBER,04 2002

I am grateful to those concerned Ethiopians who have taken the initiative to extend their relief support to the starving fellow Ethiopians. In point of fact, one of these concerned Ethiopians is the Houston based group and I, for one, wholeheartedly endorse their noble initiative.

However, while appreciating relief efforts, the main theme of this Article is 'uprooting famine once and for all.' Therefore, I will thematically highlight development strategies to eradicate famine from the Ethiopian landscape. In order to make a more meaningful discourse on the conquest of famine, I shall first address the misconceptions surrounding the causes of mass starvation.

It is an elementary notion and quite obvious even to the uninitiated that the disappearance of rain can cause drought and subsequent famine in Ethiopia. But, it is also abundantly clear that the culprit behind drought and widespread starvation is not as such lack of rain but the vulnerability of a given society that wholly depends on a rain-fed agriculture. The incredible irony is, while Ethiopia encounters drought and famine almost every decade (now perhaps every half a decade) despite the blessings of hundreds of major rivers and thousands of streams, Egypt with an ecology that does not witness rainfall and the country depending on the Nile waters of Ethiopia, is a major exporter of food crops, especially beans.

By the same token, China and India, once known as lands of famines, now (thanks to their sound government policies and development strategies) they have not only gone beyond rain-fed agriculture, harnessed their waterways, and diversified their economies, but also became relief donors themselves.

Nature as a whole and climate in particular are not to be blamed for the cyclical famines if we critically examine it in light of the living examples of countries mentioned above that managed to defeat hunger successfully. If we continue to blame nature for the causes of the Ethiopian famine (whether this conceptual framework is cynical or engendered by genuine ignorance is immaterial), we shall miserably fail to understand the vagaries of famine and possibly come up with a wrong diagnosis and hence wrong prescription.

In order to have clarity on the phenomenon of famine, we must first be able to combat ambiguous, elliptical, and seductive explanations of the Ethiopian famine. Put otherwise, we must avoid sentimental and superficial analysis of mass starvation shrouded in mysticism and religious overtones.

Once we begin to see beyond the rather seductive and ironic depictions of the famine encounter, we will be in a position to recapture a glimpse of the real causes of famine and cautiously avoid the conflation of natural calamities with 'man-made' famines. It is from this standpoint that I like to argue that the Ethiopian famine is largely caused by human forces and not by nature, and to be sure far from starving, Ethiopians should have enjoyed the fruits of a breadbasket from "Garden of Eden." (See my argument in *The Paradox of Bread Basket Starving Ethiopia*, September 2002).

The 'Garden of Eden' and/or 'Bread Basket' theories are corroborated by the Pan African News Agency (Dakar, February 8, 2001) as aptly put in its report: "It may sound paradoxical, but as informed sources at the Global Environment Facility (GEF) assert, starving Ethiopia could well pass for the world's seed basket! The very mention of Ethiopia readily evokes sad images of raging battles and starving children—of a people bereft of the bare necessities of food, clothing and tranquility. The last likely image is that of a nation whose farming practices help provide food and jobs in places as far away as Europe, Asia, and North America. Yet this largely unknown profile is a vital part of Ethiopia's complex reality."

Ethiopian scholars and professionals (experts in agronomy, rural development, development economics, political economy, and related fields) have an opportunity to seize the moment and explore the true profile of the Ethiopian enigma and contradictions of a famine prone society. This complex and complicated scenario will ultimately be unraveled, though I gather there will be a tacit collusion with the powers that be and other global interests who wanted to bury the truth in the arid zones of Ethiopia.

In any event, in spite of the hidden profile of Ethiopia, the cruel irony is that the country is unable to feed its own people. What is to be done to stamp out famine from Ethiopia? In one of my articles (*Combating Future Famines in Ethiopia*, East African Forum, April 2000), which I still consider relevant to the current situation in Ethiopia, I have posed the following questions and attempted to discuss them vis-à-vis the relapsing hunger and the miserable condition of the Ethiopian people:

“What can we do to deny famine a future in Ethiopia? Can we really conquer famine and usher development agendas for the 21st century? To answer the above questions, we need to seriously engage ourselves in addressing strategies for development in Ethiopia, the only sure way to stamp out famine from the Ethiopian landscape . . .”

The precondition to development and the eradication of famine in Ethiopia, should, as a matter of course, entail ‘ecological awareness’ that will enable Ethiopians to preserve the remaining forests (only 2.7% of the original forest is now in existence) and replenish the now barren lands with a massive reforestation program. Planting trees, however, is not enough unless supplemented by a sustainable and stringent forest management program.

The second major undertaking that Ethiopia must consider is to harness the major rivers and utilize them for irrigation and hydroelectric purposes. In this regard, some projects were developed during the Derg regime and the present government of Ethiopia, but it is not adequate when it comes to the conquest and eradication of famine. Irrigation will enable Ethiopia to bid farewell to rain-fed agriculture but it is not going to be an easy development strategy, for it will require a huge capital intensive initiative. But it does not mean it is not realizable at all. With sound public policy, domestic devotion, and international aid, Ethiopia can successfully overcome the drawbacks of a rain-fed agriculture.

Irrigation also will have its side effects. There are some scientists who are opposed to the extensive use of water through irrigation, because the latter cause salinity and sedimentation problems. However it is better to use irrigation and pay the price of ‘silt and salt’ later than depend on rain-fed culture and suffer mass starvation. After all, desalination programs can drastically lessen this problem and also help prevent the destruction of algae and midges, which are sensitive to salinity.

On top of the above two major undertakings, Ethiopia can also consider scientific methods to combat drought and famine that I have cited in *The Politics of Famine and Strategies for Development in Ethiopia* (Doctoral dissertation) and that is also recommended by the US National Academy of Sciences:

- Expansion of water supply through such means as publicly financed irrigation projects, water catchment projects, wells and desalination efforts.
- Expansion of both central and local, on site food storage facilities to reduce waste through improved handling and distribution techniques and to facilitate pest control.
- Crop selection substitution and multiple cropping development activity over an extended period and should consider a middle and long-term effort.

Similar recommendations were made by the FAO dry land agronomist P. T. S. Whiteman who undertook “Agronomy Research in Drought Affected northern Ethiopia.” In 1977. Incidentally, one off the objectives of the Whiteman team was to “conduct observation on soil-water-plant relationships and introduce and test measures likely to conserve moisture and/or enhance the efficiency of its use.”

Most importantly, famine can be defeated with certainty if a holistic and highly diversified development package is seriously considered to overhaul the Ethiopian economy and lead the country toward a sustainable agricultural and industrial development. In this context, the ‘agriculture-led industrial development’ is a suitable policy and development agenda if fully implemented to realize a situation beyond famine.

Diversification of the economy could embark Ethiopia on the threshold of ‘denying famine a future,’ but it could not be a guarantee unless the country makes a transition from a mono-culture agriculture to a multi-cropping system with emphasis on food crops, and this transition will certainly serve as a lynchpin for industrial development.

Once the cornerstone of the above development strategies is laid, it would be of utmost importance to consider the participation of the Ethiopian peasants so that they themselves could experience food self-reliance. Frances Moore Lappe and Joseph Collins, in their remarkable book *Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcities*, have promoted insightful ideas that are essential to grassroots rural development and food self-reliance:

1. Food self-reliance requires the allocation of control over agricultural resources to local, self-provisioning units, democratically organized.
2. Food self-reliance depends on mass initiative, not on government directions.
3. With food self-reliance, trade becomes an organic outgrowth of development, not the fragile hinge on which survival hangs.
4. Food self-reliance requires coordinated social planning.

The participatory mobilization of the Ethiopian peasants, as we shall see below, is prerequisite to the overall food security and the ultimate objective of uprooting the root causes of famine. In relation to the “social security of food”, I am tempted to recommend the reader to have a look at a very important book by R. E. Downs et al entitled *Political Economy of African Famine* (Food and Nutrition in History and Anthropology, 1992) and read especially Chapter Two, “Cultural Construction in a “Garden of Eden”: The Influence of Ontological Acquiescence in an African Development Projects and Its Implications for Food Security.” Any open minded and sincerely concerned person can get the gist of what I am trying to emphasize in this article.

Having made clear what we must do to defeat famine, we can now turn to the significance and importance of relief measures for our fellow Ethiopians. This too requires some scientific explanation as opposed to sentimental depiction of famine which is intertwined with mirage sensations (obscurantism!).

There are plethora of perspectives on relief operations, but we can confine ourselves, at least for now, to only four “schools” of thought that I have discussed in my previous works and that were inspired by Thomas Stephens: 1) Relief as Humanitarian Task, sees disaster in terms of unexpected human deprivation; 2) Relief as a Managerial Task, sees the problem of disaster relief stemming from the need for bringing coherence and order to relief operations; 3) Relief as Development Task: If assistance is to be effective, it must concentrate on pre-disaster planning and preparedness and from an integral component of the overall development plan; 4) Relief as Confrontational Politics: the government policy of the donor country may see relief assistance as a means of obtaining influences with the recipient country’s government.

From the above “schools” of thought, Relief as Development Task comes very close to the central theme of this article, and Ethiopians must not lose sight of the significance and relevance of this form of relief in the struggle to wipe out famine for good. ‘Relief as Development Task’ is inextricably linked to crisis management in wide spread famines and relief operations.

In *Anatomy of Disaster Relief*, Randolph C. Kent discusses disaster in three phases:

1. Emergency phase: entails measures to ensure the immediate survival of victims. At this phase, ideology becomes irrelevant and the humanity school prevails.
2. Rehabilitation phase: assistance of materials to rebuild housing, provision of seeds and equipment to produce crops, to dig wells etc. Rehabilitation is concerned with those basic steps required to restore the community to a point where it can stand on its feet again.
3. Post-rehabilitation: overlaps with general approach to development. This stage may also promote pre-disaster planning by community organizations.

On top of the above disaster phases, other important criteria for relief are:

1. Preparedness: usually incorporated within ‘National Disaster Plans’ critical resource lists maintained and updated, emergency simulation exercise undertaken, risk areas monitored and Early Warning Systems (EWS) developed.
2. Prediction: Famine indicators can now be analyzed with more accuracy, thanks to technological advancement and the interplay of the latter with socioeconomic understanding. Satellites can now detect pre-famine syndromes such as soil erosion and deforestation.
3. Assessment: must include at least the following: provision of food, transport, medical supplies, water supply, financial supply; the condition of rainfall, crop production, and market prospects; aid for relief and rehabilitation
4. Appropriate Intervention: follows ‘Assessment’. If the assessment is correct and reflects the social and economic complexities of the famine situation, it will enable domestic and external relief workers to intervene accordingly.
5. Timely Intervention: if aid is not received on time, i.e. when the famine victims needed it most, it is not aid. Timely intervention also includes when to stop aid; it is not only an awareness when aid should be delivered. The objective is to defeat famine and not create permanent beggars! Hence, our ‘Post-rehabilitation’ phase mentioned above.
6. Coordination: is by far the most important tool in the criteria of relief, but cannot be effective without the other five criteria.

Ethiopia is a poor developing country suffering intermittently from famines of great proportions. As per the UNDP Human Development Indicators 2002, Ethiopia ranks # 168; the life expectancy at birth is 43.9, human development index (HDI)

is 0.327, adult illiteracy rate 60.9 %, population not using improved drinking water is 76%, population below income poverty line (1983–2000) is 76.4%, people living with HIV/Aids: women number up to 1,100,000 and children up to 230,000, and traditional fuel consumption as % of total energy use is 95.9. The UNDP Report is a wake up call for all of us and it is for this simple reason that we need to seriously engage ourselves in any way we can for the development of Ethiopia. Ethiopia may have exhibited some “stride in economic growth,” but the latter is meaningless unless it is meant to consciously design a development package that, in turn, is geared toward the final blow of famine.

Concluding Remark: As I have indicated in *Combating Future Famines in Ethiopia*, “it must be known that the conquest of famine in Ethiopia is a mammoth historical task and it should not be left to squarely fall on the shoulders of the Ethiopian authorities. The Ethiopian intellectual and professional in the Diaspora must be willing to contribute in the reconstruction and development of Ethiopia, and the government must create a fertile ground and incentive so that Ethiopians can demonstrate commitment. Collectively, we must deny famine a future in Ethiopia.”

