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U.S. House of Representatives

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MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

TELEPHONE: (202) 226-5460

May 8, 1986

UPDATE: AFRICAN FAMINE SITUATION

Dear Colleague:

The emergency food deficit for some twenty Sub-Saharan African countries for the 1984/85 crop year was estimated by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture at 6.8 million metric tons of cereal grain. This deficit was largely met by the provision of food assistance from the United States Government, World Food Programme (WFP), Canada, the European Economic Community, and other donor governments, including India and China. The U.S. contribution, in FY 1985, exceeded 3.0 million metric tons of food aid valued at \$1.08 billion. Non-food disaster assistance provided by the U.S. Government in FY 85 totaled \$156 million.


Today, as a result of the resumption of near normal rainfall and thus crop harvest increases across the continent, the situation has altered considerably. There are now six nations considered to be severely affected by food shortages: Ethiopia, the Sudan, Botswana, Mozambique, Angola and Cape Verde. The emergency food deficit for 1986 has decreased to about 3.3 million tons of cereal grain. Pledges by the U.S. Government, WFP and the other donors have met virtually all of the deficit of 3.3 million metric tons for 1986.

Improvements in logistical infrastructures and better coordination among donor governments, relief agencies and African governments should ensure that more of the food pledged gets to famine victims more quickly in 1986 than was the case last year. Donor governments and private voluntary organizations (PVOs) have, for example, provided a number of trucks in Ethiopia to move the food to remote areas. Food is now being stored in western Sudan so that when the rains come this year and roads become impassable, people in need will not be as isolated from outside aid as they were in 1985.

There are still, of course, several million victims of the famine across the Sub-Sahara urgently needing food and non-food aid. The PVOs and relief agencies are attempting to provide seeds, farm tools, draft animals and the other requirements for people to return to their livelihoods. Health care and water systems that deteriorated greatly during the worst phases of the famine must now be restored.

Now, the urgent task at hand is to see that the donor community, African governments, and the private agencies better address the underlying causes of the famine, which was not caused by drought alone. Tens of millions of people in the Sub-Sahara are living on the margin. Much can be done to help people help themselves improve food security, increase crop production, raise their incomes, improve health standards, fight desertification and environmental decline to avert famine in the future.

Sincerely,



MICKEY LELAND
Chairman

Crockett Box 56 - F 7

MICKEY LELAND
18TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

CHAIRMAN,
SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY
AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS,
CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND FINANCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND
THE ENVIRONMENT



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COMMITTEE ON POST OFFICE AND
CIVIL SERVICE

CHAIRMAN,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON POSTAL PERSONNEL
AND MODERNIZATION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CENSUS
AND POPULATION

COMMITTEE ON THE DISTRICT
OF COLUMBIA

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

June 10, 1985

Hon. George W. Crockett, Jr.
U.S. House of Representatives
1531 Longworth HOB
Washington, D. C. 20515

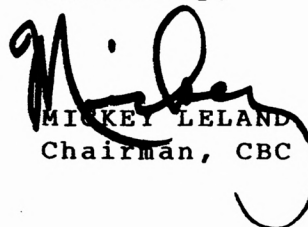
Dear George:

I do not want more time to pass without expressing my deep admiration and appreciation for your vote last week in favor of U.S. divestment from South Africa.

While I do not wish to diminish the importance of the passage of the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1985, I do want you to know that in voting for the Dellums' substitute, you demonstrated a true understanding of the need for us to do all in our power to ensure human rights for ALL people. I know your vote for the Dellums' substitute was not an easy decision; it was, however, the most just response to a very unjust situation.

I am certain your vote was a source of support and inspiration to the millions who suffer the oppression and brutality of apartheid. Once again, thank you for your understanding of human rights and justice.

Sincerely,


MICKEY LELAND
Chairman, CBC

ML/dr