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CRITICAL ECONOMIC SITUATION IN AFRICA

Note verbale dated 14 December 1984 from the Permanent Representative
of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

The representative of the United States of America to the United Nations presents her compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to transmit the enclosed communiqué from the Development Advisory Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which met in Paris on 3 and 4 December 1984.

The Government of the United States would appreciate the circulation among Member States of this communiqué as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda item 139.

ANNEX

Communiqué from the Development Advisory Committee of the
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Members of the development assistance committee consult on means to improve international co-operation to meet the acute problems of African and other low-income countries.

Members of the Development Assistance Committee, joined by representatives of the World Bank, IMF and UNDP, discussed at the Committee's high-level meeting on 3rd-4th December means of strengthening the contribution of official development assistance to adjustment and resumed development in the developing countries. This meeting focused on action required to respond more effectively to the economic and social crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Members reviewed trends and prospects in aid and noted that official development assistance and multilateral development lending had been a major factor of support and stabilization for many developing countries facing acute economic, financial and social problems. They recognized the urgent requirements of Sub-Saharan African countries for additional aid. More effective and better co-ordinated official development assistance is required to help African countries overcome both immediate and long-term obstacles to development.

DAC members accepted the African challenge as an international task which calls for the closest co-operation. They agreed that the tragic situation in drought-affected countries demands prompt and flexible responses by the entire international community. They are determined to pursue their efforts commensurate with the dimension of the problems. DAC members are committed to work with the Secretary-General of the United Nations to organise effective international emergency action involving the countries affected and all those in a position to contribute and welcomed the initiatives he has taken in this regard.

Members discussed the international action being taken to meet immediate needs in drought-affected African countries. DAC members are providing substantial and increasing amounts of food aid and other emergency assistance such as assistance for storage and food transportation, medical services, water supply and agricultural inputs -- either directly or through international institutions and non-governmental organizations. Pledges of food aid provided by DAC members during 1984 is reported to the World Food Programme reached well over 3 million tons.

There was a high degree of consensus on the need for improved co-ordination of emergency relief efforts in the seriously affected countries, under the leadership of their authorities. Members stressed the importance of emergency relief operations taking due account of medium and longer-term development objectives. Donors asked the competent international institutions to continue to provide up-to-date information on requirements for food and related logistic, administrative and other assistance and agreed to make systematic, co-ordinated efforts to report operationally relevant information on an agreed basis. DAC members indicated their readiness to provide additional technical and other assistance to African government institutions and international organizations so as to strengthen their capacity to ensure that aid reaches the most vulnerable people.

DAC members stressed that efforts should be made not only to strengthen emergency assistance, but also to promote further assistance for long-term development, in particular for agricultural and food production. AID agencies have already been moving in the general direction suggested by the World Bank in its recent report on "Toward Sustained Development in Sub-Saharan Africa -- A Joint Program of Action" and broadly supported by industrial and developing countries at the meeting of the development committee in September 1984. Furthermore, DAC members recognized that their programmes and practices would have to be adapted in order to achieve the degree of co-ordination, responsiveness and coherence required. The suggestion that the World Bank convene an early meeting of AID donors in view of the urgent need to mobilize additional external assistance, through for example the creation of a special facility, in support of policy reform programmes of African nations found widespread support.

DAC members reviewed current efforts to improve AID co-ordination as a means of achieving greater effectiveness. The responses of recipient governments, which must be at the centre of the co-ordination process and play the leading role in initiating and sustaining effective co-ordination arrangements, have generally been positive. Members and multilateral institutions are prepared to assist developing countries in strengthening their policy planning and co-ordination capacities. Members welcomed the efforts by the World Bank to increase the number of consultative groups to strengthen the aid co-ordination functions of these groups, and to promote local arrangements for co-ordination. DAC members also welcomed the related efforts of the UNDP to strengthen the co-ordination capability of round tables for least-developed countries. Growing attention is paid to pragmatic arrangements at local and sectoral level.
