### BY THE U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

## Report To The Honorable Byron L. Dorgan House Of Representatives

# The United States' Response To The Ethiopian Food Crisis

Ethiopia is currently suffering from a famine which is affecting an estimated 7.9 million people and requiring massive amounts of external food assistance. As early as 1982 the United States was aware that a potentially serious food shortage situation existed in the northern provinces of Ethiopia. The United States to date has provided more relief assistance to Ethiopia than any other government or international organization. However, the initial U.S. response was delayed because of strained relations between the two governments and several policy and administrative concerns related to the provision of relief aid to Ethiopia.

This report discusses the need for massive food aid in Ethiopia, policy concerns raised within the U.S. government and among other members of the international donor community about providing emergency food aid to Ethiopia, and when and how the United States responded to this crisis.



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### UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

B-217932

The Honorable Byron L. Dorgan House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Dorgan:

Subject: The United States' Response to the

Ethiopian Food Crisis (GAO/NSIAD-85-65)

In response to your letter of November 20, 1984, we have reviewed the circumstances surrounding the U.S. response to the Ethiopian food crisis. We focused on your concerns about when the United States knew that Ethiopia needed massive food aid and the adequacy of the U.S. response to the crisis. Details on the results of our work appear in appendix I.

The United States knew that a potentially serious food shortage situation existed in the northern provinces of Ethiopia in late 1982. This condition was substantiated in the spring of 1983 when representatives of two international private voluntary organizations made extensive visits to the northern province of Tigray and reported that acute malnutrition and serious drought conditions existed. The food availability situation in the rest of Ethiopia was unclear until March and April 1984 when the U.S. Embassy began to report its concerns over the failure of the spring rains and the possible impact this could have on the These concerns were substantiated in late May 1984 country. when the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization reported that the spring harvest had failed and Ethiopia would experience a food deficit of over 370,000 metric tons during the last 9 months of 1984. The severity of the situation became clearer in late September, after the Ethiopian government's Tenth Anniversary celebration. Despite strained relations between the U.S. and Ethiopian governments and delays incurred in the initial U.S. response, the United States has provided, overall, more drought and famine relief assistance to Ethiopia than any other government or international organization.

During fiscal years 1983 and 1984, the Agency for International Development (AID) approved 11 requests for emergency food assistance for Ethiopia from four private voluntary and international organizations. We found that the initial requests for each of these fiscal years were submitted by the Catholic Relief Service (CRS), a private voluntary organization. These requests required 5 to 6 months, respectively, to be approved. Most of the remaining nine requests were received just prior to or just after the approval of the two CRS requests. At the time the CRS requests were being reviewed, several policy concerns were raised regarding the provision of food aid to Ethiopia, which we believe contributed to the exceptionally long period of time it took to approve these requests. However, once the CRS requests were approved, seven of the remaining nine requests were approved within 3 weeks of their receipt and two were approved within a 1- to 3-month time frame.

In December 1982 CRS requested 838 metric tons of food aid under Public Law 480, title II, to initiate an emergency feeding program in the town of Makelle, capital of the northern province In November 1983 CRS requested an additional 16,000 of Tigray. metric tons of food to maintain the Makelle program and to expand into the neighboring province of Eritrea. The time lapses between AID's receipt and approval of the CRS requests were considerably longer than the time required to process typical private voluntary organization food assistance requests. though the United States knew that Ethiopians in the rebelcontrolled northern provinces had a potentially serious need for external food support in late 1982, the United States had strong concerns about the ability of the Ethiopian government and private voluntary organizations to carry out a food program which would reach all hungry Ethiopians, including those in the northern provinces. The United States was also sensitive and cautious about committing large amounts of food assistance to a Marxist governed country where detailed and accurate verification of real food needs could not be accomplished and where the possibility of food diversion existed.

We believe these administrative concerns relating to the merits and appropriateness of the individual requests as well as the policy concerns raised with regard to the provision of food aid to Ethiopia directly influenced the time it took to approve the CRS requests. The United States initiated support for a cross-border feeding program to reach the hungry people in the rebel-controlled areas of northern Ethiopia in mid-1983 and expanded support to such programs in 1984. However, the reported broad needs for food in northern Ethiopia in late 1982--particularly the growing needs caused by displaced persons in the town of Makelle--and the relatively small amount of food requested by CRS for feeding families in an accessible area of

Tigray province, raise legitimate questions as to the reasonableness of the delays in approving the two CRS requests.

The circumstances surrounding the food program in Ethiopia were not typical of those normally confronting the United States when it plans and carries out title II emergency food programs. The basic problems impacting on the program included extremely poor relations between the two governments; the lack of an AID presence in the country; government restrictions on the movement of foreigners in Ethiopia, which limited external donors' capabilities to verify the extent of the food needs; and the existence of hostilities between the government and rebels in the northern provinces, which created additional difficulties in delivering food to millions of hungry people. Because the Ethiopian situation is unique, we are not in a position to make specific recommendations to improve future operations of emergency food programs based on our review of the U.S. handling of the Ethiopian food crisis.

As arranged with your office, we did not seek official agency comments. However, we provided appropriate Agency officials with a draft of this report and obtained their informal views. They generally agreed with the report's content. Unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 30 days from the date of this report. At that time we will send copies to interested parties and make copies available to others upon request.

Sincerely yours,

Frank C. Conahan

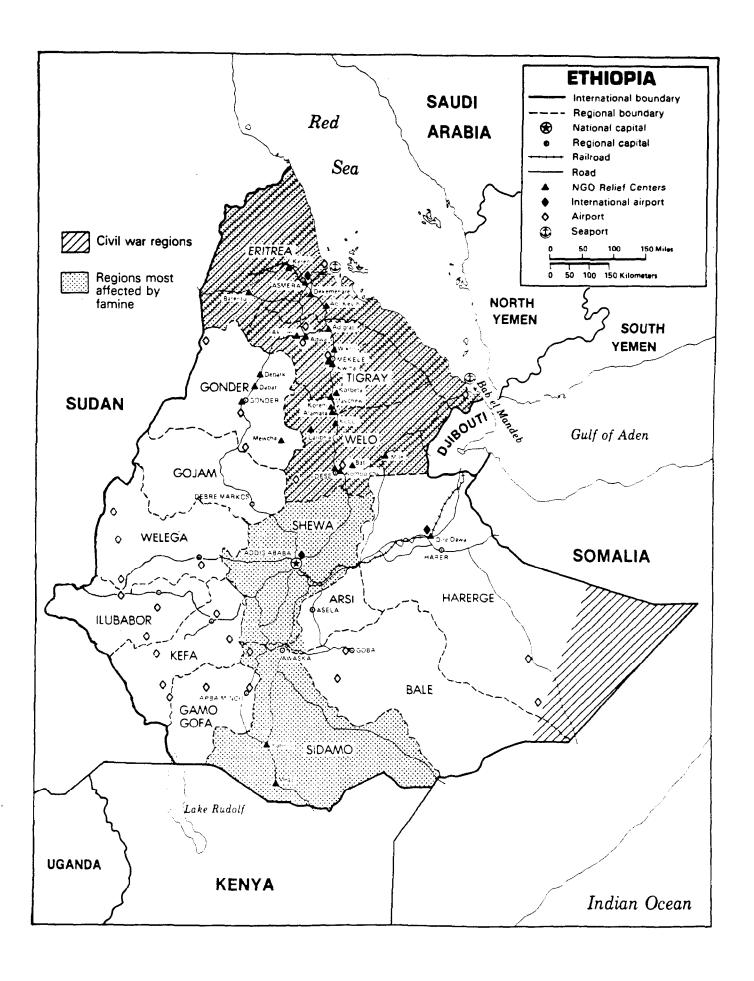
Frank C. Con hau

Director

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	ABBREVIATIONS	
AID	Agency for International Development	
CRS	Catholic Relief Service	
EEC	European Economic Community	
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organizations of the United Nations	
IGETSU	Interagency Group on Ethiopia and the Sudan	
OMB	Office of Management and Budget	
PVO	Private voluntary organization	
UNDRO	United Nations Disaster Relief Office	
WFP	World Food Program	

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### THE UNITED STATES' RESPONSE TO THE ETHIOPIAN FOOD CRISIS

#### BACKGROUND

Drought and famine are not new phenomena in Ethiopia. In fact, the country experienced 10 identified severe droughts and/or famines between 1900 and 1985. The current crisis seems to have similarities to the 1972-73 drought and famine to which over 200,000 deaths were attributed. The seriousness of current conditions in Ethiopia, however, may far surpass that of prior droughts and famines. The United Nations Office for Emergency Operations in Africa estimates that 7.9 million Ethiopians are currently affected by the drought with 5.5 million of these people located in the northern provinces of Eritrea, Tigray, and Wello. In January 1985 the House Select Committee on Hunger reported that an estimated 300,000 Ethiopians had died of starvation.

For many years the northern provinces of Eritrea and Tigray have been in revolt against the Ethiopian government, and at present, insurgent forces control a large portion of these provinces. In the northernmost province of Eritrea, secessionist forces have been at war with the Ethiopian government since 1962 when Eritrea, then an autonomous state, was absorbed by the greater Ethiopian state. Insurgents in Eritrea are primarily Marxist-Leninist in their ideology and currently control most of the province with government control limited to major towns and roads. The Department of State is less certain of the political orientation of insurgents in the Tigray province who are fighting for an autonomous Tigray and/or a union with an independent Eritrea and a more representative government. Since rebel forces control about 85 percent of Tigray and a large part of Eritrea, the Ethiopian government is only able to distribute food aid in the few cities in the north under its control. To date, international relief workers have obtained only limited access to the provinces in this region.

Ethiopia will require an estimated 1.5 million metric tons of food relief aid between October 1984 and November 1985. As of March 7, 1985, the U.S. government has committed assistance valued at \$209.9 million--including 381,796 metric tons of food--to Ethiopia since the beginning of fiscal year 1983. Over 85 percent of that assistance was committed during the first 5 months of fiscal year 1985.

#### OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

To accomplish this review, we performed work in Washington, D.C., at the appropriate offices of the Agency for International Development (AID) (Bureau for Africa, Bureau for Food For Peace

APPENDIX 1

and Voluntary Assistance, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, and Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination), the Department of State (Bureau of African Affairs, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, and Bureau for Refugee Programs), and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). At the AID offices, we obtained and analyzed cables and other documents and held extensive discussions with knowledgeable and responsible officials concerning Ethiopia's food crisis and the U.S. response. We also met with responsible officials in OMB and discussed the impact of the U.S. decision-making process on the food crisis. The OMB represents the concerns of the National Security Council in the Working Group of the Food Aid Subcommittee of the interagency Development Coordination Committee, which assesses and approves requests/proposals for U.S. emergency food assistance to foreign countries.

We reviewed files at the Department of State on the Ethiopian food crisis. At the Department, the chairman of the Interagency Group on Ethiopia and the Sudan (IGETSU), a group established to consider ways to provide food to the hungry people in the rebel-controlled regions, provided us with an extensive briefing on the Ethiopia food crisis and other related problems and the U.S. concerns about the overall Ethiopian situation.

We found that orderly documentation of the U.S. response to the Ethiopian crisis was limited. Much of our data was obtained verbally and from second person sources. Certain key officials influencing the 1983 and 1984 decisions have departed the AID African and Program and Policy Coordination bureaus and the National Security Council. However, through corroboration of verbal statements from a number of officials, we were able to reconstruct many of the steps taken by the United States to provide food assistance to Ethiopia. With the cited exceptions, our work was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

#### THE NEED FOR MASSIVE FOOD AID

Since 1982, the international donor community has been aware of growing food problems in Ethiopia. In the early spring of 1983, the U.S. government knew that over 3 million people in the northern four provinces of Ethiopia--Eritrea, Tigray, Gondar, and Wello--were suffering from large shortfalls of food. Even though the Ethiopian government's relief agency and international organizations had reported in late-1982 that there was a drought in northern Ethiopia and that living conditions were causing people to flee to the Sudan, the drought and famine conditions were not substantiated by the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture. Responding to an Ethiopian government request, the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) issued a

plea in April 1983 for 100,000 tons of food and other humanitarian assistance for one million people in need and accessible to government relief efforts in northern Ethiopia. The UNDRO plea was preceded one month by a League of Red Cross Societies' appeal for \$2.9 million in supplementary food, shelter, and medicines for 19,000 people in the seriously affected areas of Gondar and Wello provinces. Those pleas provided partial substantiation that serious drought and famine conditions existed.

The lack of rain, coupled with the presence of armed conflict, proved disastrous to the spring 1983 harvest in northern Ethiopia. Throughout 1983, the general belief was that while food shortages existed in the four northern provinces, ample food was either pledged by external donors or was in country stocks to meet the country's immediate needs. The Ethiopian government did not provide data supporting the extent of food needs. Since travel within country was restricted, the United States relied on inspection visits by U.S. Embassy and visiting AID officials, other external donors, and international and private voluntary organizations to verify the extent of the drought. However, the full extent of food needs, and the number of Ethiopians directly affected, remained uncertain to external donors throughout 1983 and most of 1984.

On May 5, 1983, the U.S. Embassy determined that drought and food shortage conditions in the north central regions of Ethiopia constituted a disaster situation and made available \$25,000 in disaster assistance funds to the Catholic Relief Service (CRS) for start-up costs associated with its emergency feeding program in Makelle, the capital of the northern province of Tigray.

The U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa and several international organizations prepared optimistic reports in late 1983 and early 1984 on the main fall harvest and the amount of food available in-country. Even though parts of the northern provinces not under government control had experienced a drought and poor harvest, the international donor community concluded that domestic production, government food stocks, and food aid pledged by the donors could meet the needs of Ethiopians accessible to the government distribution system until December 1984. The donor community was so optimistic about adequate food being available that in February 1984, several major donors refused to commit new food aid until they received assurance that a need actually existed.

In March 1984, however, the U.S. Embassy began receiving conflicting reports on the food availability in Ethiopia. For example, the donor community revised earlier estimates to show that food was available to feed the population through November instead of December; a visiting U.N. official believed food was

sufficient only through the end of May; and a special U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) task force reported that Ethiopia would require an additional 125,000 tons of food through 1984. On March 30, the Ethiopian relief agency, while briefing the donor community, stated that an additional 400,000 tons of food were needed in 1984.

In March 1984 the Embassy also began to report its concern over the delayed spring rains to the Department of State and AID. These reports cited the growing alarm within the donor community over the possible impact this event could have on food availability. The spring harvest accounts for less than 15 percent of Ethiopia's total food production; however, this harvest is important in helping the people until the main fall harvest and accounts for up to 50 percent of the annual food production in the several provinces. The Embassy, on April 4, 1984, cabled Washington that "a very serious situation could develop in Ethiopia this year and we will be remiss if we are not adequately informed and prepared... " and requested that AID conduct an immediate survey of the food supply and drought and famine situation. In response to this request a survey was undertaken. It was concluded on May 11 and recommended that (1) the situation be closely monitored and (2) no additional food be offered to the Ethiopian government at that time. In late April 1984, FAO reported that the spring crop had failed, and in late May, FAO released a detailed assessment of the food situation and concluded that a food deficit of 372,000 tons would be experienced from April through the remaining months of 1984.

Beginning in May 1984, the Ethiopian government became silent on the drought and food shortage situation while the Marxist government prepared for its Tenth Anniversary celebration in September. Even prior to the summer, from November 1983 through April 1984, one of the two major ports in Ethiopia was closed to food imports while cement and other commodities from Eastern Bloc sources were given priority. In early August 1984, the Embassy learned that erratic weather and an outbreak of pests in the major grain-producing provinces were seriously threatening the fall harvest and that a grain shortfall in excess of 2 million tons could occur. The Embassy further learned the Ethiopian government was making a concerted effort to conceal the evidence of this serious food problem.

In mid-September of 1984, three events occurred within a 2-day period which clarified the Ethiopian need for massive food aid and impacted on the time and expansion of the U.S. response to the crisis. On September 19, a senior private voluntary organization (PVO) official with extensive worldwide famine experience informed the U.S. Embassy that he had never seen a situation as bad as that which existed in northern Ethiopia. On the same day, the AID administrator met with a number of PVO

representatives who said their organizations had reached their absorptive capacity and the U.S. should begin channelling food aid through the Ethiopian government. On September 20, a senior western ambassador to Ethiopia reported that "Ethiopia is starving to death" and about 900,000 Ethiopians "will have died" of malnutrition and related diseases by the end of 1984.

### CONCERNS IMPACTING ON THE U.S. RESPONSE TO ETHIOPIA

U.S. policy normally restricts food aid to countries controlled by an unfriendly government to those foods which can be channelled to needy people through private voluntary and international organizations. Therefore, prior to fiscal year 1985, U.S. funded Public Law 480, title II, emergency food programs in Ethiopia were administered by the World Food Program (WFP), the International Committee of the Red Cross, and two PVO's. According to AID officials, Ethiopia was declared a friendly country in 1984 so that a direct government-to-government food aid program could be initiated. CRS, a PVO, has also carried out a regular Public Law 480, title II, feeding program in Ethiopia since 1975.

Programs funded under Public Law 480, title II, are administered by AID. Each request for emergency food aid must be approved by the title II Working Group of the Food Aid Subcommittee of the interagency Development Coordination Committee before the food can be programmed and released for shipment to the recipient country. The Working Group, composed of representatives of AID, OMB, and the Departments of State and Agriculture, is responsible for ensuring that proper accountability, monitoring, and implementation systems are in place. A detailed discussion of the food approval process appears on page 11.

Our analysis of the U.S. response to the food needs in Ethiopia showed the U.S. government had major concerns regarding the provision of humanitarian food assistance to that country. These concerns varied by agency--AID, OMB, State, and the National Security Council--and impacted on the size and timeliness of the U.S. response. Not only did these concerns affect the overall U.S. response but they also delayed the approval of CRS requests in December 1982 and November 1983 for emergency food assistance. Details of the CRS requests are summarized on pages 13 through 19.

The four primary concerns of the U.S. government included:

1. Verification that an emergency food situation existed in Ethiopia.

 Assurance that food provided by the United States was reaching those Ethiopians in the most need.

- 3. Assurance that U.S.-provided food was not being diverted or otherwise misused.
- 4. Assurance that U.S.-provided food was not being used either directly or indirectly to support a government which is unfriendly to the United States.

Responsible Department of State and AID officials said these concerns were influenced by the relationship between the U.S. and Ethiopian government, the relationship between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union, and the lack of commitment by the Ethiopian government toward assisting the hungry people. As examples of this lack of commitment or emphasis on the famine, the international donor community has continually cited the Ethiopian government's (1) lack of supporting data to substantiate and verify food shortage claims and appeals for international food aid, (2) inadequate funding of the government's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, (3) closing one of the two major ports in Ethiopia to food imports for five months in late 1983 while, at the same time, requesting external food aid from the donor community, and (4) failure to release government held food stock for relief efforts or commercially purchase food on the international market. These primary concerns resulted in several European donors increasing the amount of food aid channeled through PVO's and reducing the amount provided through the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission.

The donor community generally accepted the fact that there were serious drought and famine conditions in the northern provinces of Tigray and Eritrea. However, the actual extent of the problem was unknown, partially because the Ethiopian government has minimal control over the provinces and food could not be easily distributed to the people in need. Thus, most of the data used to address major U.S. concerns were based on conditions in those regions or areas controlled by the government. Following are summaries keyed to the four major concerns listed above.

#### Verification of the situation

The extent of the famine and the validity of food shortage claims made by the Ethiopian government were topics of debate within the U.S. government during 1983 and 1984 and directly impacted on the timeliness and amount of U.S. responses to the crisis. Without a mission in Ethiopia, AID relied on assessments by the U.S. Embassy personnel, visiting AID teams, and such secondary sources as PVO's, other donor countries, and

relief to those in need, regardless of location (i.e., rebelcontrolled as well as government-controlled regions). In spite of the security problem associated with providing relief assistance to areas under insurgent control, international PVO's have been providing modest amounts of relief commodities to those areas by cross-border operations from the Sudan for several years.

During the spring of 1983, two international PVO's made extensive visits to the Tigray province and reported that acute malnutrition and serious drought conditions existed. We were informed that a consensus was quickly reached within IGETSU that assistance had to be provided to the hungry people in northern Ethiopia. A suitable implementing organization and a relatively small (\$1.5 million) program were subsequently approved for the cross-border feeding of people in the rebel-controlled northern provinces in mid-1983.

In early 1984, the food shortage situation in the northern provinces continued to worsen. After many discussions within IGETSU, the program was expanded with additional food being provided in the spring of 1984. This program was further expanded in the fall and winter of 1984. We were informed that the establishment of the cross-border feeding program directly impacted on the time required to approve the two CRS requests for emergency food assistance because there was concern over the adequacy of the response to the large problem in the rebelcontrolled regions in the north, which the CRS requests did not address.

### Prevention of food misuse and diversion

In three instances during 1983 donor food was allegedly being either diverted or misused in Ethiopia. Only one of the allegations involved U.S.-donated commodities, but all three caused delays in the approval of the December 1982 and November 1983 food requests from CRS while they were being investigated. According to senior AID officials, the diversion allegations were treated with a high degree of caution, and there was an unwillingness within the U.S. government to approve any food assistance to Ethiopia until the alleged practices were examined and either dismissed or corrected.

In March 1983 the Sunday Times of London reported that most of the food aid being provided by the European Economic Community (EEC) to the northern provinces was being diverted to the Ethiopian army and to the Soviet Union as payment for arms. This allegation had been investigated and proved false by the EEC in February, one month prior to its public disclosure. The

international organizations operating in Ethiopia to verify the extent of the food crisis. The resulting assessments and reports, however, also suffered from restricted travel within country and the lack of independently verified data.

AID and others in the international donor community made repeated requests in 1983 and 1984 to the Ethiopian relief agency for information on the (1) food stockpile and harvest statistics, (2) commercial food imports, (3) warehouse capacities, and (4) transportation capabilities for food distribution. This information is normally readily available to donors during emergency situations, but the Ethiopian government refused to honor the potential donors' requests and refused offers to help assemble such data. While certain data was obtained unofficially, a detailed report on such vital questions as the size and composition of the Ethiopian harvest was last available from the Ethiopian government in 1981. General donor dissatisfaction with the Ethiopian management culminated in March 1984 when the heads of 15 European and North American diplomatic missions in Ethiopia collectively issued a strong request that the Ethiopian government provide them with the needed information. action resulted in a partial response by the Ethiopian government. However, even in February 1985, travel in Ethiopia continued to be restricted, and the United States and other donors faced difficulties in accomplishing satisfactory verification of food needs and monitoring the end-use of food shipments.

#### Feeding the most needy in Ethiopia

The provision of food aid to the most needy people in the northern rebel-controlled regions of Ethiopia has been a continuing concern within the U.S. government for the past 2 years according to State and AID officials. Of the 7.9 million Ethiopians currently estimated to be affected by the drought, the for Emergency Operations United Nations Office believes that 5.5 million are located in the northern provinces of Eritrea, Tigray, and Wello. This represents more than half of the total population of these three provinces. Of this number, an estimated 2 million to 3.5 million people are located in areas of Tigray and Eritrea which are insecure. Concern over severe food shortages in the rebel-controlled regions and the possibility of a massive outflow of refugees into the Sudan led the Department of State, AID, and the National Security Council to establish the Interagency Group on Ethiopia and the Sudan (IGETSU) in April 1983 to address these problems.

The primary concern within IGETSU was, and is, that U.S. food aid be provided to the most needy people in the rebel-controlled areas and not to the rebel organizations. According to a senior IGETSU representative, the United States was attempting to establish a balanced food aid program which would provide

WFP also investigated this allegation and concluded that no such abuses had occurred. (See page 15.)

In November 1983 the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa advised AID in Washington of the appearances of Public Law 480 vegetable oil in the local markets. Visiting AID personnel investigated that allegation and found the oil on the local market to be at the level of petty pilfering and resale of individual rations. The investigation, initially delayed because of security concerns, was completed in mid-May 1984--6 months after the allegation was first made.

On December 4, 1983, the Sunday Times of London reported the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission was responsible for diverting--and covering up the diversion of--15,000 tons of WFP donated food. According to a defecting Ethiopian relief official, the food was diverted to two Ethiopian government agencies rather than going directly to the government's relief agency for distribution to the intended recipients. False documentation was then alleged to have been prepared to mislead a WFP auditor. The WFP investigated this allegation and reported that the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission had failed to observe "procedural requirements" of notifying WFP prior to the exchange of commodities. The intended recipients had received a substitute quantity of grain roughly equivalent to their initial 15,000-ton allocation. The investigation resulted in the WFP establishing a new reporting and monitoring system.

### Assurance that U.S. food does not support the Ethiopian government

A continuing concern of AID and the Department of State is whether donated food is used to support an Ethiopian government that is openly hostile to the United States. Prior to the government-to-government agreement reached in November 1984, this concern was satisfied by implementation of the U.S. policy whereby food assistance was provided only through PVO's and international organizations and not through the Ethiopian government or its agencies. The Ethiopian government's failure to import food during the past 3 years led many donors to believe the Ethiopian government might be profiting from the current famine by relying on donated foods instead of commercial purchases. Many officials within the U.S. government argued that donated food was saving foreign exchange for the Ethiopian government, and those savings increased its capacity to import military and nonessential goods and concentrate its funds on the war effort in the northern provinces. This concern remains open and is frequently debated, but the U.S. policy to feed hungry people is currently overriding that concern.

#### THE U.S. RESPONSE TO WIDESPREAD STARVATION

Any measurement of the U.S. response to the famine in Ethiopia must consider the entire food shortage situation confronting the African continent. FAO reports that 21 African countries are experiencing exceptional food supply problems, and estimates indicated that as many as 150 million Africans are affected by the current drought, with approximately 10 million facing actual starvation. FAO further believes these 21 countries will require 6.8 million tons of food in 1985, more than twice the amount received during the prior year. The most acute problems are being experienced in Chad, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, and the Sudan. The United States has responded to this crisis by providing 158,000 metric tons of emergency food aid in fiscal year 1983 and 505,000 metric tons in fiscal year As of March 1, 1985, the United States has committed a record level of 1.3 million metric tons of emergency food aid to Africa valued at \$490.2 million for fiscal year 1985. emergency response is in addition to the 1.2 million metric tons of food to be provided to Africa through nonemergency Public Law 480 programs in fiscal year 1985.

While the previously discussed concerns have had an impact on the timing of U.S. food aid to Ethiopia, the U.S. government has responded to the crisis in Ethiopia by committing 381,796 metric tons of food and \$37.5 million in nonfood emergency assistance since the beginning of fiscal year 1983. U.S. food aid to Ethiopia is valued at \$172.4 million and is summarized in the following table. Specific details on the fiscal years 1984 and 1985 response are presented in appendix II.

Fiscal Years 1983 through 1985 (note a)
(\$ in millions, as of March 7, 1985)

	Fiscal Metric tons	·	1983 Value	Fiscal y Metric tons		1984 Value	Fiscal y Metric tons	year 1985 Value	Metric	Value
Regular food aid	8,172	\$	3.7	11,863	\$	6.0	11,869	\$ 5.6	31,904	\$ 15.3
Emergency food aid	6,113		2.5	29,625	_	11.2	314,154	143.3	349,892	157.1
Total, food aid	14,285		6.2	41,488		17.3	326,023	148.9	381,7%	172.4
Emergency non-food aid	_		3.0	_		5.9		28.6		37.5
Total aid	14,285	\$	9.3	41,488	\$	23.1	326,023	\$ 177 <b>.</b> 5	381,796	\$ 209.9

a numbers may not add due to rounding.

For various reasons, some countries chose not to formally announce their contributions to humanitarian relief efforts or the value of such contributions. This, along with the Ethiopian government's practice of frequently making multiple announcements of some Eastern Bloc contributions, has made it extremely difficult to quantify the U.S. response as it relates to that of On December 6, 1984, UNDRO reported that the international community had contributed \$200 million in cash and in kind to relief efforts in Ethiopia. The U.S. response at that time was \$103.2 million, or 52 percent of the total repor-The United Nations Office for Emergency ted contributions. Operations in Africa reported in mid-February 1985 that 760,000 tons of food aid had been given or pledged in support of famine relief in Ethiopia for 1985. Of this total, 258,600 tons, or 34 percent, had been provided or pledged by the U.S. government.

### REQUESTS FOR EMERGENCY FOOD AID NOT APPROVED IN A TIMELY MANNER

During fiscal years 1983 and 1984 AID approved 11 requests for emergency food assistance for Ethiopia--4 in fiscal year 1983 and 7 in fiscal year 1984--from four private voluntary and international organizations. The initial requests for each of these fiscal years were submitted by CRS and required 5 and 6 months, respectively, to be approved. Most of the remaining nine requests were received just prior to or just after the approval of the CRS requests. As discussed on pages 13 through 18, there were several administrative and policy concerns raised during AID's review of these two CRS requests. However, once the CRS requests were approved, seven of the remaining nine requests were approved within 3 weeks of their receipt and two were approved within a 1 to 3 month timeframe. AID officials advised us that requests such as those submitted by CRS are normally approved within 2 to 3 weeks.

The request approval process, events impacting on the less than timely approval of these two CRS requests, and events surrounding the delayed U.S. response to the April 1983 UNDRO appeal for aid to Ethiopia are summarized below.

#### The emergency food approval process

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The process of providing Public Law 480, title II, emergency food aid involves four principal federal agencies. AID is responsible for the overall administration and management of the Public Law 480, title II, Food-for-Peace program.

Requests for emergency food aid are usually developed in the needy country by the implementing program sponsor (i.e., PVO, WFP, or the recipient government) in concert with the incountry AID mission. In cases such as Ethiopia where there is

no AID mission present, AID-contracted representatives, visiting AID teams, or officials of the U.S. Embassy assist the program sponsor in the development of the proposal. Before PVO requests are formally submitted to AID, the proposals are approved by the AID in-country mission, or the U.S. Embassy and the implementing PVO's headquarters. Similarly, WFP requests for U.S. participation in emergency aid projects are prepared by WFP field representatives and approved by WFP officials in Rome before being formally forwarded to AID in Washington, D.C. as well as to the responsible AID overseas mission.

All requests for emergency food aid are received and initially reviewed by AID's Bureau for Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance. Once satisfied with the appropriateness of the request the Bureau circulates it within AID's geographic, policy, and service bureaus for review. According to AID officials, this review by AID usually requires about 2 to 3 weeks from receipt of the request. Upon approval by AID, the request is submitted to the Public Law 480, title II, Working Group of the Food Aid Subcommittee of the interagency Development Coordination Committee for final approval.

The Working Group is chaired by AID and consists of representatives from the Departments of Agriculture and State and Each representative addresses concerns of specific interest to his respective agency. For example, AID is primarily interested in the developmental and humanitarian elements of the proposal; Agriculture addresses U.S. food and commodity concerns; State addresses foreign policy implications; and OMB addresses budgetary aspects. OMB also provides input from the National Security Council. Once all concerns have been aired, Working Group members vote as to the appropriateness of the request, and according to AID officials, final approval is granted once a consensus has been reached. Department of Commerce and Treasury representatives may attend these meetings to express their specific concerns about the request under consideration; however, officials from these departments rarely Once agreement has been reached, AID notifies its inattend. country mission and the program sponsor.

Other than the general guidance appearing in AID Handbook 9, there is no specific written policy or guidelines with regard to the review and approval of emergency food aid requests by the Working Group. Prior to the current African food crisis, the Working Group met infrequently to address emergency requests, with most of the communication between members concerning approval of requests being informally made via telephone.

The documentation of the emergency approval process employed by the Working Group until the fall of 1984 was less than adequate since, other than the request approval cable, there is no documentation available to indicate (1) when the Working

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Group met, (2) what requests were considered, (3) what requests were disapproved and why, (4) what were the concerns of the individual members and how they were satisfied, and (5) what was the disposition of requests that were not approved.

The magnitude of the African crisis and the resulting volume of emergency food aid requests submitted have led to the establishment of a more formalized and structured approach by the Working Group, according to AID officials. Under the new system, which was recently implemented, the Working Group meets approximately every 2 to 3 weeks or on an as-needed basis. Once satisfied with the request, AID places it on a written agenda for the meeting. During the meeting, the members vote on the approval of the requests, and after a consensus is reached, AID notifies the mission and corresponding food sponsor of the approval.

The final step in the food approval process involves the procurement and delivery of the food. Once approved, AID submits the commodity requests to the Department of Agriculture which is responsible for coordinating, assembling, and processing the commodity request from acquistion to shipment. After the food is delivered abroad, AID coordinates and monitors the implementation of the emergency program.

### The Catholic Relief Service request Of December 1982

CRS has operated an ongoing regular Public Law 480 feeding program in Ethiopia since 1975. Targeted toward preschool children and pregnant and lactating mothers, the program is operated in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa and the eastern Ethiopian city of Dire Dawa. This program distributed 8,172 and 11,863 metric tons of food in fiscal years 1983 and 1984, respectively, and has been approved at a level of 11,869 metric tons for fiscal year 1985. During fiscal year 1983, CRS made two requests for additional Public Law 480, title II, food aid to establish and maintain an emergency feeding program in the town of Makelle, capital of the northern province of Tigray. At the time of these requests, CRS was the only PVO operating a U.S. government sponsored feeding program in Ethiopia.

Encouraged by the U.S. Embassy, CRS submitted an emergency feeding program proposal to AID in December 1982. The proposal requested 838 metric tons of food and necessary ocean transportation costs and was valued at about \$397,000. Inland transportation costs were to be paid by CRS. Though small when considering emergency requests, CRS determined the 838 metric tons to be the amount necessary to assist approximately 5,000 families in Makelle for 9 months.

The CRS program was limited to Makelle for three reasons. First, Tigray province was suffering from recurring problems of erosion and loss of soil fertility. The prior year's acute drought had intensified these problems. Second, a large number of displaced persons were flocking into the provincial capital for temporary shelter from the drought and the ongoing armed The townspeople, who were hostilities in the countryside. already suffering from a severe food deficit, were further burdened by the influx of displaced persons. At the time of the proposal, the Ethiopian government was restricting its assistance to the displaced persons around Makelle and was not feeding the townspeople. Finally, Makelle was one of a few locations in the northern provinces where food could be delivered with a degree of security.

Because of the perceived urgency of the situation and the immediate need of the new program, CRS requested authority to borrow title II food from its existing program stocks. The emergency shipment, upon arrival, would then be used to replenish the regular program.

The Working Group of the Development Coordination Committee approved the proposal on May 7, 1983, approximately 5 months after the request was submitted to AID in Washington.

### Events directly impacting on the request

While the proposal was under examination in Washington, concerns were raised about (1) the ability of CRS to effectively deliver and monitor the food in the Makelle area, (2) the seriousness of the drought and civil war situation in Tigray province, and (3) the need for the United States to establish an overall "balanced" food aid program which provided relief to all of those in need, regardless of their location (i.e., rebelcontrolled as well as Ethiopian government-controlled regions of Ethiopia).

During the first months of 1983 several efforts were made to clarify the first two concerns. According to AID officials, the monitoring concern was based upon CRS' lack of experience in the Makelle area and the qualifications of the local organization selected by CRS to be responsible for distributing the food This concern was satisfied when the to the Makelle families. U.S. Embassy received assurances from the director of the Ethiopian government relief agency that CRS would be able to deliver and monitor the assistance in Makelle. The seriousness of the by reports from a PVO drought situation was substantiated representative and an international organization official. situation was further verified when a Department of State refugee official, after a January 1983 field visit, reported that "serious emergency food needs exist in the Makelle area." In addition to that trip report, AID March cable traffic from

WFP headquarters in Rome indicated that the deteriorating situation in Ethiopia continued to be a priority concern. Satisfied that these concerns had been adequately addressed, AID's Office of East African Affairs forwarded the request to the Assistant Administrator for Africa for his approval in late March 1983.

On March 28, 1983, the Sunday Times of London reported an allegation that food aid donated by the EEC was being diverted from drought stricken northern Ethiopia to the Ethiopian army or to the Soviet Union as payment of arms. Neither CRS nor U.S. government food was involved in the allegation; however, the report rekindled AID's concern as to whether the CRS program should be approved. Although the allegation had been found to be unsubstantiated by a prior EEC investigation and was immediately investigated and proven false by the WFP, AID remained concerned with the allegation and cabled the U.S. Embassy on April 13, 1983 requesting details on the EEC investigation. The cable indicated this information was needed before the CRS request could be approved.

The U.S. Embassy responded on the same day, stating that the EEC investigation found no evidence of diversion of either EEC or other donor food aid. Upon receiving the Embassy's response, a second memorandum to AID's Assistant Administrator for Africa was developed on April 15, 1983, conveying the results of the EEC's investigation and again recommending approval of the CRS request. A third memorandum to that office on April 22, 1983, discussed the AID position on providing assistance to Ethiopia. This memorandum concluded that the United States should be responsive to the humanitarian needs of all noncombatants in Ethiopia, regardless of location.

During the first week in May, three events occurred which impacted on the approval of the CRS request. First, a memorandum was directed to the AID administrator by the Bureau of Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance recommending immediate approval of the request considering the emergency nature. Second, the AID administrator was informed that a television crew from NBC had been granted Ethiopian visas to develop a story on the drought, and three national newspapers had submitted similar visa requests. Finally, the Charge d'Affairs of the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa declared that a state of disaster existed in Ethiopia on May 5, 1983. The CRS emergency request for 838 metric tons of food was approved by the Working Group of the Development Coordination Committee on May 7, 1983.

### Other events impacting on the request

Paralleling the period in which AID was reviewing the CRS request, the need for a food aid program in the rebel-controlled

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northern regions of Eritrea and Tigray was also being debated. food shortages in these regions, the government's inability and/or reluctance to distribute food to the people in these areas, and the possibility of a massive outflow of refugees into the Sudan led State, AID, and the National Security Council to examine means of addressing these problems through IGETSU. We were told that once famine conditions in Tigray province were substantiated, it was agreed within IGETSU that the pending CRS request for food aid to an emergency feeding program in the Ethiopian government-controlled town of Makelle would be approved once a suitable feeding program and implementing PVO were approved for the rebel-controlled area of Ethiopia. A suitable implementing organization and a relatively small (\$1.5 million) program were approved in mid-1983. (See page 8 for further details.)

### Other Catholic Relief Service requests in fiscal year 1983

The second CRS request for emergency title II assistance in fiscal year 1983 involved 4,500 metric tons of food to be used to expand the newly established Makelle emergency feeding program. The request was submitted on July 6, 1983--2 months after the initial 838 metric tons of food had been approved--and was approved within 9 days.

During the 2 months between the approval of the first request and the submission of the second request, three important events occurred concerning the provision of food to Ethiopia. The first was a June 1, 1983, letter sent to the AID administrator by 74 House members urging a more prompt response to the Ethiopian drought. Secondly, the Senate introduced and agreed to Senate Resolution 168 on June 29, 1983, which called for immediate emergency assistance to Ethiopia. (See page 20.) Finally, the Washington Post published a series of articles during late June 1983 which described the drought conditions in Ethiopia, the United States' failure to respond to the situation, and the politics involved in the provision of humanitarian food aid to Ethiopia.

### The Catholic Relief Service request of November 1983

U.S. awareness of the drought situation increased after the initial 1983 CRS emergency program in Makelle was approved. Two U.S. groups visited Ethiopia in August 1983 to observe and assess the food shortage situation. First, an AID team visited Ethiopia for approximately two weeks in early August to assess the need for food aid and to recommend an appropriate short—and medium—term U.S. response. The team concluded its visit by recommending that an additional 15,000 metric tons of food aid be provided. This amount represented half of the projected

Ethiopian November and December 1983 food gap and was to be provided through a PVO (8,000 metric tons) and WFP (7,000 metric The second trip was made by a delegation from the House Foreign Affairs Committee which, inter alia, visited a feeding site in Gondar province and met with PVO and Ethiopian government officials. The AID team accompanied the delegation to the Gondar feeding site and, according to AID officials, obtained the first detailed look at existing drought and famine conditions in the province. At the conclusion of its visit, the delegation made an urgent request to the Department of State and AID for increased food and transportation assistance. after this request, AID announced that 15,000 metric tons of emergency food aid would be available in early fiscal year 1984 and, as discussed on pages 19 and 20, provided an \$800,000 grant to UNDRO for the inland transport and emergency air delivery of food.

Advised that emergency food was available, CRS submitted a proposal for 16,000 metric tons of food and approximately \$1.5 million in logistical support during the first week of November 1983. The proposal had been approved by the U.S. Embassy and was designed to reach the drought stricken areas in Tigray province, where CRS had an emergency program, and also expanded into the province of Eritrea, where the number of drought victims reportedly continued to increase. The program was to feed approximately 55,000 families for 9 months.

The proposal received additional support from a second AID assessment team which visited Ethiopia during December 1983 and reported that the full 16,000 metric tons should be immediately approved. In January 1984, AID's Food for Peace Office advised CRS that it was ready to recommend approval of half of the request (8,000 metric tons) to the Working Group of the Development Coordination Committee. According to a Working Group member, the CRS request was reduced because sufficient food was not available to satisfy all of the outstanding worldwide requests pending before the group. The 8,000 metric tons of food and the necessary logistical support were not approved, however, until May 1984—approximately 6 months after AID received the request. A request for the remaining 8,000 metric tons was submitted on July 20, 1984, and was approved during the first week of August 1984.

#### Allegations of food aid diversion

During the 6-month period between submission and approval of the CRS request, two concerns were raised regarding the propriety of providing emergency food assistance to Ethiopia. The first was AID's concern over whether or not the donated food could be properly accounted for and its distribution monitored. Therefore, when two allegations of food diversion were received within one month of the CRS November 1983 request, approval

delays were incurred. The second concern centered around the question of how much food was actually available in Ethiopia.

The first allegation of misuse originated from the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa which reported that large amounts of CRS vegetable oil were appearing in the local market. While AID's policy is to immediately investigate all diversion reports concerning title II commodities, restricted travel and security problems in Ethiopia prevented the timely investigation of this allegation. CRS conducted an internal audit of the situation and reported in February that the contract numbers on the cans of oil in question did not match any received by CRS in Ethiopia. Despite this information, AID informed CRS in April 1984 that the unresolved question of accountability required further delays in the approval of their request.

As discussed on page 9, a second diversion allegation was reported in December 1983. This allegation concerned the 15,000 metric tons of EEC food previously reported to have been diverted to the Soviet Union in March 1983. While this initial allegation was investigated by the EEC and WFP and proven to be false, the Sunday Times of London reported that a senior Ethiopian government relief official had defected with a document which purported to detail how the government had falsified documents to conceal the diversions from a WFP auditor. On February 8, 1984, the AID administrator wrote to WFP requesting information on its response to the allegation. WFP responded in March 1984 and stated that the matter was under review and that WFP was taking all necessary steps to ensure proper accountability. In May 1984 an AID team made an inspection visit to Addis Ababa and reported that the problem of U.S. donated vegetable oil being sold on the local market represented a normal amount of pilfering and theft associated with any feeding program and that it should not delay or preclude the U.S. approval of urgently needed drought assistance. The CRS request was approved on May 18, 1984, one week later.

Other concerns and events impacting on the Catholic Relief Service request

Another concern which created delays in the approval of the CRS request was the donor community's belief that sufficient amounts of food were available within Ethiopia. For example, in January 1984 the WFP announced that there was enough food pledged or in-country to address the famine through 1984. Other reports stated that except for the northern regions there was adequate food in Ethiopia. In March 1984, the donor community met in Addis Ababa and concurred that there was enough food either pledged or in stock to meet Ethiopia's needs until November 1984. Therefore, they recommended no additional food be

pledged to Ethiopia. However, in late March 1984, an UNDRO team reported that there was only enough food to meet the need in Ethiopia until May 1984.

While this CRS request was under review, the need to expand the cross-border feeding program in the rebel-controlled regions was being explored by IGETSU. (See page 8.) During this period the logistical capabilities of the implementing PVO's and the possible adverse implications of the program were discussed. The cross-border program was subsequently expanded.

During the months of April and May 1984, a series of events occurred which helped obtain approval of the CRS request. On April 4, 1984, the U.S. Embassy requested that AID conduct an immediate survey of the food supply and drought/famine situation in Ethiopia. The U.S. Embassy again reiterated the need for an immediate food survey on April 16, 1984. The cable stated that a serious condition could develop due to the failure of the spring rains, which normally start in February. An April report by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization concurred with the Embassy report that the crop had failed. (See page 4.)

On May 11, 1984, an AID team completed a 16-day inspection visit and concluded that drought and hunger existed in the northern region; however, the Ethiopian government could not effectively distribute any more food than was currently incountry or in the pipeline until during the late fall harvest. Therefore, the team recommended that the United States provide no additional emergency assistance to the Ethiopian government or its relief agency. They did, however, recommend the immediate approval of half the CRS emergency request and the necessary logistical support, as this program was targeted toward northern Ethiopia. On May 18, 1984, the Development Coordination Committee Working Group approved the 8,000 metric tons of food, and AID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance approved a \$924,885 transportation grant for logistical support.

### The U.N. Disaster Relief Office appeal of April 1983

Responding to an Ethiopian government request, UNDRO reviewed the food situation in the Eritrea, Tigray, Wello, and Gondar provinces in early March 1983 and issued an appeal for international assistance to these provinces on April 22, 1983. The appeal was to provide assistance to one million of the most seriously affected Ethiopians who were accessible to government relief efforts for an initial period of 6 months. The appeal requested 100,000 metric tons of food, medical supplies, transportation and shelter assistance, and was valued at \$30 million to \$35 million.

The donor community was quick to respond to all aspects of the UNDRO appeal, except for the \$8 million transportation element which was aimed at rehabilitating and expanding the delivery capabilities of the Ethiopian government's relief While the United States did not approve any additional food, it did apply the food it was providing through WFP and the CRS regular and emergency programs to the UNDRO appeal--17,400 The U.S. was reluctant to address the transportametric tons. tion element of the appeal because AID believed (1) there was an adequate quantity of trucks available for lease in country which could be used to transport food, (2) the Ethiopian government had trucks assigned to the military which could be reassigned to transport relief food aid, and (3) most of the transport equipment was of non-U.S. manufacture, and the request for the provision of spare parts had been directed principally toward the countries of original manufacture.

During the summer of 1983, Congress became concerned with failure of the administration to address the Ethiopian drought problem and one of the primary topics of congressional debate became the U.S. response to the UNDRO appeal. this appeal, 74 House members wrote to the AID administrator encouraging him to (1) respond promptly to existing and future appeals for emergency aid to Ethiopia and (2) reinstate funding for the existing regular Public Law 480, title II, program operated by CRS, which had been eliminated from AID's fiscal year 1984 budget. AID responded to the House members 6 weeks later (July 13, 1983) and stated that it had approved the continuation of the CRS program. Unsatisfied with the response to their letter and the delays incurred in approving the UNDRO appeal, the House introduced and extensively debated House Resolution 280 on July 21, 1983. This resolution called upon the U.S. government to (1) expedite and increase food transportation assistance, (2) reinstate the CRS-operated title II program, and (3) respond promptly to future appeals by international and private voluntary organizations.

Also during this period, the Senate debated and passed a resolution similar to the one debated in the House. This resolution, Senate Resolution 168, which was passed on June 29, 1983, urged the President to make food and other emergency supplies immediately available to the people of Ethiopia. It also called upon the President to take such action as might be necessary to ensure that the commodities are transported to those Ethiopians in need.

On September 28, 1983--5 months after the appeal was made--the United States provided UNDRO with an \$800,000 grant. Use of these funds was restricted to (1) the inland transport of WFP foods, (2) the internal airlifting of commodities, and (3) administrative costs associated with the transport of commodities.

## APPROVED RUBLIC LAW 480 ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPTA PISCAL YEARS 1984 AND 1985 (as of March 7, 1985)

•	Fiscal	year 1984	Fiscal year 1985					
	Metric tons	Value	Metric tons	Value				
TITLE II - RESIAR PROSPE								
Catholic Relief Service (CRS)	11,863	\$6,035,000	11,869	\$5,577,500				
Total, regular program	11,863	\$6,035,000	11,869	\$5,577 <b>,500</b>				
TIME II - BERGENLY PROGRAM								
CPS Christian Relief and Development	11,980	\$5,601,200	40,558	\$19,104,600				
Association (CDAA) OF6 Missionaries of Charity (CR6/MC)	~	-	53,459 3,338	26,428,000 1,378,500				
LICROSS Lutheran World Relief World Rood Program	5,000 145	1,790,300 68,700	4,530	2,535,000 - -				
World Rood Program/IEFR Save the Children	12,500	3,775,900	9,973 1,339	5,165,100 587,000				
Am. Jewish Joint Dist. Comm. World Vision IORC	-		825 2,906 .11,070	791,300 1,340,500 6,092,800				
CARE Covernment-to-government	_		- 3,025 50,000	2,391,500 14,283,000				
Total, title II energency program	29,625	\$11,236,100	180,023	\$80,097,300				
Total, title II	41,488	\$17,271,100	192,892	\$85,674,800				
SECTION 416 - EMPRISARY ROLD (note a)								
CDAA CPS/MC World Vision	-	-	11,697 1,316 7,200	\$12,325,700 1,455,300 9,252,000				
Total, section 416			20,213	\$23,033,000				
ROOD SHOURITY RESERVE - EMERGENCY FOOD (note b)								
CARE CDAA World Vision Save the Children LICROSS Am. Jewish Joint Dist. Com.	-	- - - -	38,501 44,651 10,971 8,820 3,300 6,675	14,242,100 16,297,700 4,004,400 2,822,400 1,082,400 1,722,100				
Total, food security reserve		-	112,918	\$40,171,100				
Total, emergency program	29,625	\$11,236,100	314,154	\$143,301,400				
TOTAL, ALL ROOD COMPODITIES	41,488	\$17,271,100	326,023	\$148,878,900				

Phairy products (nonfat dry milk and butter oil) authorized by Section 416 of Rublic Law 480.

Source: Agency for International Development

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>b</sup>Up to 300,000 metric tons of wheat mede available by the Rood Security Wheat Reserve Act of 1980 for emergency distribution through Public Law 480, title II.

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