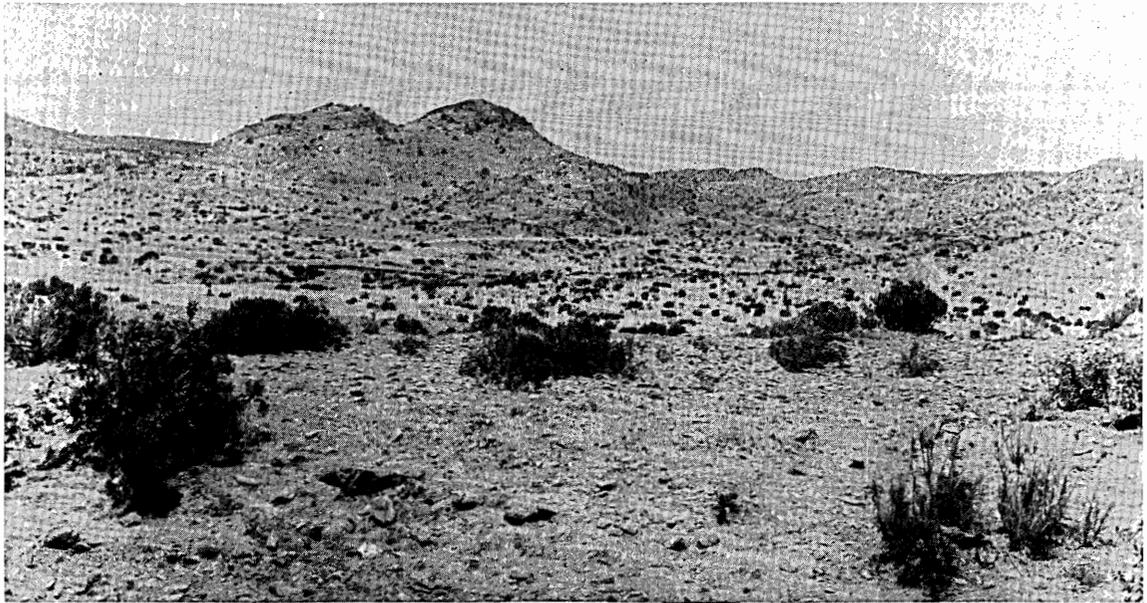


DISASTER  
RELIEF

CASE REPORT  
Ethiopia-Drought  
1974-1975

Agency for International Development  
Washington, DC 20523



*The barren hills of most of Tigre Province offered neither food nor shelter from the hot summer sun. During the rainy season, there is no vegetation to hold water which quickly runs down the hillslopes causing erosion and then evaporates.*

**Foreign Disaster Case Reports are publications of the Office of the Foreign Disaster Relief Coordinator, Agency for International Development. This office has responsibility for coordinating U.S. Government foreign disaster relief responses and for the further coordination of such activities with those of the U.S. private and international disaster relief communities.**

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# ETHIOPIA

## Drought—1974/1975

The worst drought of the century in West Africa spread unabated to the most densely populated areas in Ethiopia, embracing the major parts of Wollo and Tigre Provinces, as well as sections of Gomu Gofa, Bale, Harraraghe, Sidamo, and Shoa Provinces. It began with the near total failure of rains in 1971. The rain that did fall was irregular, causing erosion and flooding. Areas which had traditionally produced more cereal grains and livestock than the inhabitants consumed became deficient production areas in spite of redoubled efforts by the farmers to harvest more crops. Deforestation and profligate land-use practices took their toll in ways which became clear when drought conditions intensified. With little or no rainfall in 1973, almost all stocks of food had been exhausted and the situation reached disaster proportions with the deaths of more than 100,000 people.

Value of U.S. Government Assistance .....	\$27,315,444
Value of Assistance by U.S. Voluntary Agencies .....	1,633,111
Value of Assistance by the International Community .....	57,662,624

In the escarpment zones of Tigre, Wollo, and northern Shoa Provinces the drought began with the failure of the rainy season in 1971. By August 1973 the situation reached disaster proportions with widespread deaths caused by starvation and disease.

Entire villages were deserted as people began flocking from the affected areas. The streams of peasants leaving their farmlands in Wollo and Tigre became torrents as they migrated towards towns along the highways from Makalle to Dessie, Dessie to Addis Ababa, and Dessie to Assab.

The nomadic element suffered most. As in the Sahel countries, nomads live in a harsh environment and are highly dependent on livestock for food as well as a means of exchange for other basic requirements. It is estimated that 80 percent of their cattle, 50 percent of their sheep, and 30 percent of their camels and goats perished. The resulting food shortage meant that many had to sell their remaining animals in order to buy

food. For vast portions of the nomadic population, the result has been all but total destruction of their economic livelihood.

The subsistence farmer, suffering from several years of abnormally dry conditions (especially in Tigre and Wollo, found that even though farming conditions had improved in 1973, his lands had been so devastated by the preceding dry period that he had no choice but to leave the land to seek food.

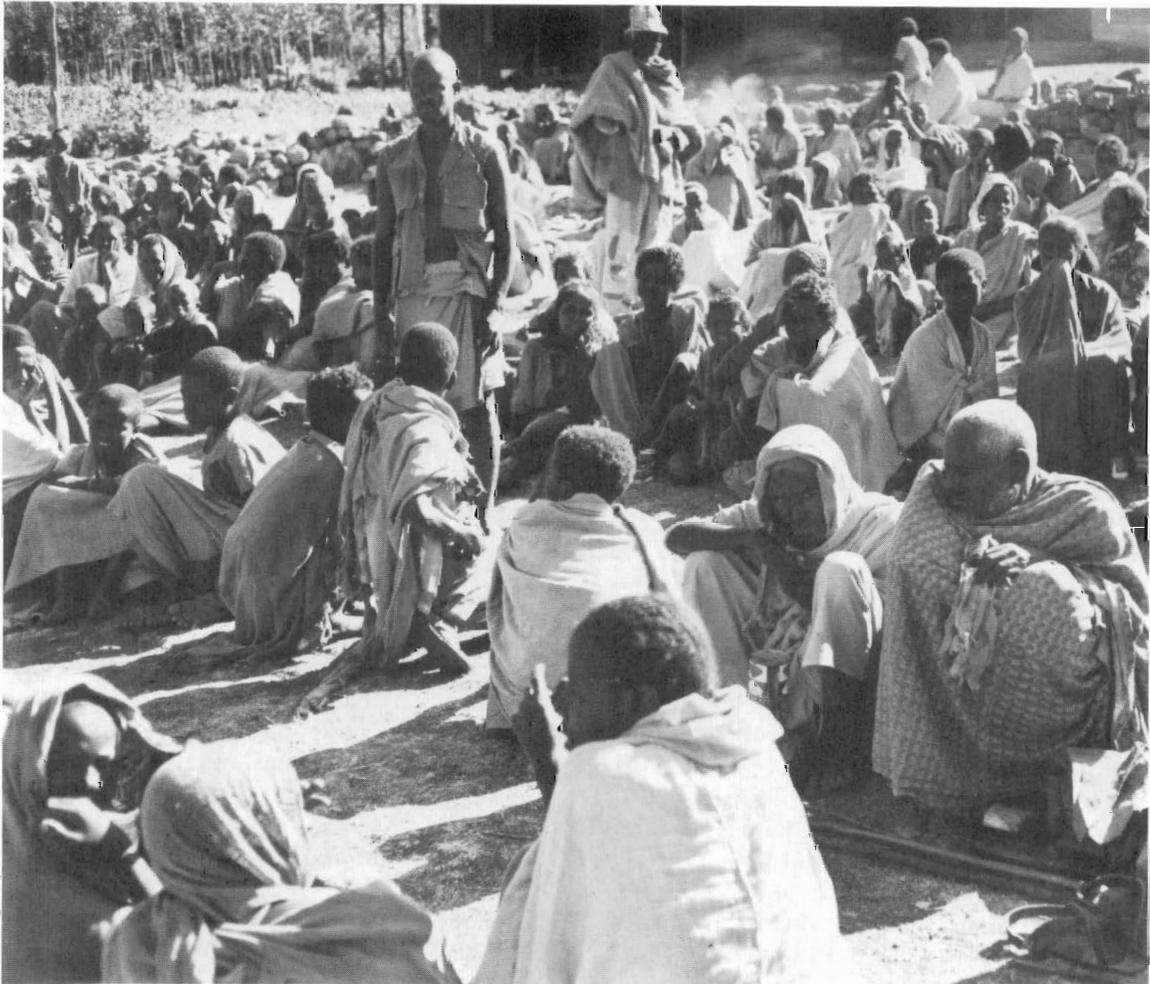
The extent of crop failures, livestock losses, disease incidence, etc., could only be estimated. Fragmented information derived by Ethiopian governmental officials from the migrating population and information gathered from other sources painted an alarming picture of a national disaster of great magnitude. Clearly, the Ethiopian Government faced two major tasks: first, engaging in an immediate lifesaving operation and second, implementing a longer-range rehabilitation effort.

## **ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA**

The previous government (Imperial Ethiopian Government) was slow to recognize the extent of the drought throughout 1973, but began as early as March to meet an emergency whose dimensions could not be determined at that stage. In April, a National Drought Relief Committee was established for the purpose of planning and seeking assistance, initially from domestic sources, in an attempt to cope with the disaster. Later, action was taken by the Committee in appealing to the World Food Program (WFP) and selected bilateral donor governments

and agencies for food aid for the stricken people.

It was not until early 1974 that a major effort was made by the Government of Ethiopia (GOE) to establish a high level governmental unit to deal with relief and rehabilitation. Following the unsettled conditions in the country during February and March 1974 which led to the resignation of the existing government and the appointment of a new one, it was announced that the drought was a matter of highest priority. The new government established a Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) at Cabinet level which was empowered to receive and channel all domestic and external assistance for drought programs.



*Drought victims at a relief camp in Wolfo Province.*

The Commission, comprised of Ethiopian professional, technical, and military staff was assisted by several foreign experts and U.S. Peace Corps volunteers. It expanded its operation by assigning civilian and military personnel to the drought-affected provinces.

The RRC greatly improved the Government's ability to respond quickly to the urgent drought related problems. Prompt and effective actions were taken to resolve port congestion, improve commercial transport of grain, dispatch vehicles and commodities to new famine areas, and to coordinate outside assistance.

Although donors met regularly to coordinate their relief efforts throughout the latter half of 1973, monthly donor meetings, under the chairmanship of the Commissioner of RRC who reported directly to the Prime Minister's office, were started in May 1974. These meetings provided a regular forum for the discussion of problems and permitted all foreign donors to exchange views and coordinate new activities with the Government of Ethiopia. Additionally, the RRC began publishing a monthly newsletter to provide summaries of the drought situation, as well as statistics on the movement of commodities and other logistical information.



*Road construction on this food-for-work project will provide the means for getting food farther into drought-stricken areas.*

## ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

Because of the advanced stage of the drought, the first priority was the prevention of additional deaths. As early as January 1973, PL 480 Title II wheat scheduled for food-for-work projects in Wollo and Tigre was diverted for emergency feeding in these provinces. In late April the U.S. Government (USG) received requests from the GOE for the diversion of 2,000 metric tons of Title II wheat, already in Ethiopia and scheduled for food-for-work projects, to the affected areas.

In addition the GOE asked the USG to provide 8,000 metric tons of grain for the relief program. Both requests were approved. By the end of June 1973, a total of 5,823 metric tons of wheat valued at \$885,150 had been utilized. By June 1974 food grains totaling 64,368 metric tons had been committed to famine relief by the USG.

On December 3, 1973, U.S. Ambassador E. Ross Adair responded to a request from the GOE for emergency relief to the drought-stricken provinces and exercised his disaster relief authority, committing \$25,000 for initial assistance. Ambassador Adair determined the drought was of such magnitude that continued aid would have to be provided to the GOE. A program of USG relief assistance was developed in five categories:

- Supply and shipment of grain and other food commodities from the United States;
- Assistance in transportation of relief supplies within Ethiopia;
- Provision and transport of essential non-food commodities abroad;
- Technical assistance, primarily for logistics; and
- Financial support of the GOE drought relief programs.

From the beginning of the first USG input to famine relief, emergency measures were directed by the Mission Director, executed by the Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) staff, and augmented by the U.S. Embassy Economic and Political Sec-

tions. The relief and rehabilitation activities were given top priority and centered around the A.I.D. Food and Agriculture Division. The Mission's emphasis was placed upon the urgent task of assisting in the distribution of grain and relief supplies to affected areas by the most expeditious means.

In January 1974, a significant upsurge of drought-related work commenced, and the Mission established a Relief Policy Committee to review famine-related issues and to work closely with the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission and Christian Relief Committee. Consultations were held between the USG and the GOE to determine the measures to be undertaken in further support of Ethiopia's efforts to ameliorate the effects of the drought. The outcome of these consultations was a specific program of recovery and rehabilitation projects developed jointly by both governments and supported by a U.S. \$8 million Grant Agreement allocated from a Congressional Appropriation of \$8.5 million to A.I.D. for Africa Drought Assistance. Political events within Ethiopia delayed the execution of the Agreement until February 20, 1975, even though it was approved by the A.I.D. Administrator Daniel Parker in November 1974.

Five major activities are now being carried out under the Grant. The principal objective is the strengthening and augmentation of the GOE's capacity to conduct drought recovery projects by the provision of goods and services which it could not otherwise obtain.



*At a distribution center at Degahbur, a mother gathers a ration of corn which was provided by the U.S. Government for famine relief.*

Summary of USG Assistance— FY 1974

A.I.D. Contingency Fund . . . . \$	25,000
Helicopter support (3), five weeks . . . . .	400,000 ✓
In-country transport costs . . . .	200,000
Airlift of 45 vehicles for UNDRO . . . . .	245,000
Cash grant to Red Cross to purchase blankets . . . . .	100,000
Medical supplies . . . . .	100,000
Local procurement drugs . . . .	10,000
Local purchase 4 each, 4-wheel drive vehicles . . . .	44,000
Ocean freight costs— 78,200 lbs. nonfat dry milk, 20,000 lbs. food, and water tanks for CWS . . . . .	11,375
Ocean freight costs—medicines and 573,400 lbs. of food for MAP . . . . .	76,810
Air freight costs— medicines for MAP . . . . .	68,000
Galvanized sheeting . . . . .	197,500
Insecticides and sprayers . . . .	122,000
400 tires and tubes, polyvinyl sheeting, tents, and blankets Air freight costs of tires and polyvinyl . . . . .	241,800 ✓ 58,000
10,000 blankets and airlift costs	93,794 ✓
Ocean freight and costs— 25 trucks . . . . .	298,500 ✓
Local procurement of cloth . .	15,000
Water tanks (3), 5,000 gallon capacity . . . . .	33,765 ✓
Disaster relief experts (temporary assignment) . . . .	47,250
PL 480, Title II Food for Peace commodities . . . . .	15,587,150 ✓
Total . . . . .	\$17,974,944

Summary of USG Assistance— FY 1975

Pastoralist surface water development . . . . .	\$1,210,000 ✓
Rural road construction . . . . .	4,562,500
Accelerated food production . .	700,000
Emergency crop protection for small farmers . . . . .	1,200,000
Water well construction . . . . .	178,000 ✓

Grant to the Christian Relief Development Association . .	100,000
Grant to the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission	100,000 ✓
Grant for the local purchase of medical supplies . . . . .	15,000 ✓
Grant for local procurement of grain grinding mills . . . . .	20,000
Grant to UNICEF to improve feeding/health services . . . .	100,000 ✓
Transport cost of grain for Red Cross . . . . .	22,000 ✓
Transport cost of nonfat dry milk for Church World Service . .	2,500 ✓
Aircraft charter for the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission .	10,000 ✓
Emergency procurement of insecticides . . . . .	101,000 ✓
Crop survey costs . . . . .	25,000 ✓
Emergency storage of grain . . .	14,000 <sup>1</sup>
Disaster relief experts (temporary assignment) . . . .	65,500
PL 480, Title II Food for Peace commodities . . . . .	915,000
Total . . . . .	\$9,340,500

**ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY  
U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES**

Ethiopia received vital assistance from U.S. voluntary agencies who contributed cash and relief supplies for emergency assistance and for rehabilitation and construction projects. Value of cash and in-kind donations follows:

American National Red Cross . . \$	16,371 ✓
Baptist World Relief . . . . .	26,000
Catholic Relief Services . . . . .	556,000
Christian Reformed World Relief Committee . . . . .	10,000
Church World Service . . . . .	87,700
Lutheran World Relief . . . . .	309,132
Medical Assistance Programs . . . .	404,188
Mennonite Central Committee . .	55,000
Seventh-Day Adventist World Service . . . . .	73,720
World Relief Commission . . . . .	12,000
World Vision Relief Organization	83,000
Total . . . . .	\$1,633,111

**ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY  
THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

Donor Country, Organizations, or Private Groups				
			People's Republic of China (Government) .....	1,799,167 ✓
			Czechoslovakia	
			Red Cross .....	1,721 ✓
Argentina (Government) .....	\$ 240,000 ✓		Denmark (Government) .....	361,064 ✓
Australia (Government) .....	1,080,010 ✓		Red Cross .....	85,152 ✓
Red Cross .....	324,111 ✓		DANCHURCHAID .....	331,220 ✓
AUSTCARE .....	74,000 ✓		Rotary Club .....	1,500 ✓
Australia Catholic Relief .....	59,393 ✓		Finland (Government) .....	39,267 ✓
Australia Council for Overseas Aid .....	1,137,883 ✓		Red Cross .....	46,607 ✓
Freedom from Hunger .....	74,400 ✓		Finnish State Church (unspecified) .....	62,827 ✓
Austria (Government) .....	50,000 ✓		France (Government) .....	775,000 ✓
Belgium (Government) .....	75,000 ✓		Red Cross .....	5,585 ✓
Red Cross .....	53,312 ✓		Federal Republic of Germany (Government) .....	5,635,041 ✓
Bulgaria			Red Cross .....	237,106 ✓
Red Cross .....	17,275 ✓		Brot fur die Welt .....	119,250 ✓
Canada (Government) .....	2,354,500 ✓		Diakonesches Werk .....	273,429 ✓
Red Cross .....	70,033 ✓		Stern Magazine .....	7,276,119 ✓
Development and Peace .....	4,989 ✓			



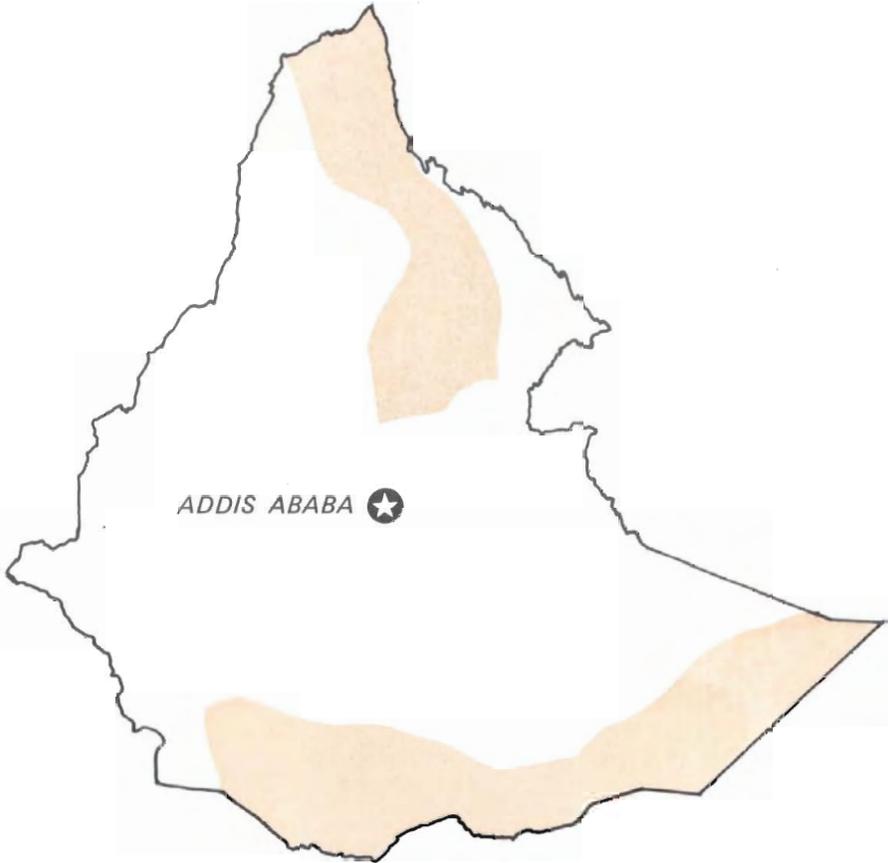
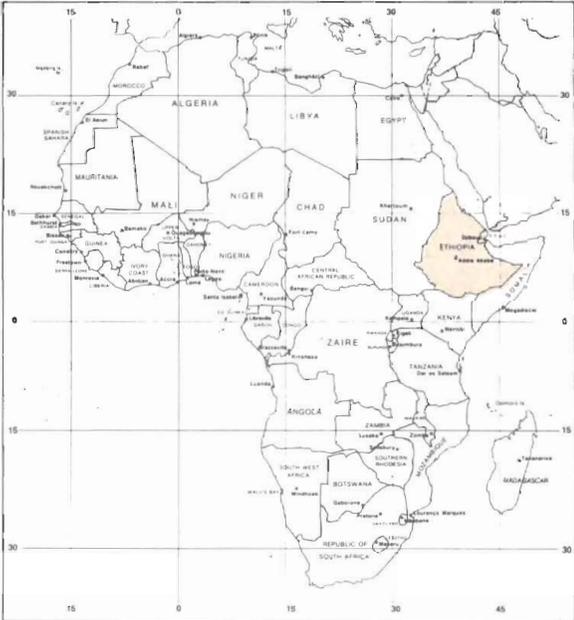
*Some farmers in southern provinces who lost their oxen use camels to pull plows for tilling the soil.*

Greece (Government) .....	110,033 ✓	Switzerland (Government) .....	367,830 ✓
Red Cross .....	1,248 ✓	Red Cross .....	61,936 ✓
Employees—Chase Manhattan Bank .....	260 ✓	Helimission .....	25,000 ✓
Hungary		Terre des Hommes .....	5,000 ✓
Red Cross .....	10,865 ✓	Thailand	
India		Red Cross .....	126 ✓
Red Cross .....	4,903 ✓	Uganda (Government) .....	500 ✓
Iran		United Kingdom (Government) .	2,916,744 ✓
Red Cross .....	21,192 ✓	Red Cross .....	324,111 ✓
Ireland (Government) .....	144,380 ✓	Christian Aid .....	374,600 ✓
Red Cross .....	4,824 ✓	Help the Aged .....	15,029 ✓
Concern .....	80,000 ✓	OXFAM .....	807,100 ✓
Freedom from Hunger .....	48,674 ✓	Save the Children Fund ....	63,102 ✓
Japan		Scottish Catholic Internat'l.	
Red Cross .....	44,871 ✓	Aid Fund .....	9,410 ✓
Fuji Spinning Company .....	40,000 ✓	Society of International	
Kenya (Government) .....	811,594 ✓	Missionaries .....	245,241 ✓
Republic of Korea (Government)	5,937 ✓	Thomas de la Rue & Company	2,252 ✓
Kuwait		United Society for Propagation	
Red Cross .....	480 ✓	of the Gospel .....	508 ✓
Liberia (Government) .....	10,000 ✓	War on Want .....	33,535 ✓
Libya .....	1,000,000 ✓	U.S.S.R.	
Luxembourg		Red Cross .....	39,423 ✓
Red Cross .....	33,227 ✓	Yugoslavia	
Monaco		Red Cross .....	9,386 ✓
Red Cross .....	167 ✓	Hungry Child .....	1,500 ✓
Netherlands (Government) ....	1,139,062 ✓	Zaire (Government) .....	201,509 ✓
Red Cross .....	80,283 ✓	Total .....	\$37,926,942
Terre des Hommes .....	2,000 ✓	International Organizations	
Wilde Granzen .....	75,000 ✓	Caritas Internationalis .....	\$ 784,757 ✓
New Zealand (Government) ....	74,184 ✓	Lutheran World Federation ....	620,868 ✓
Red Cross .....	55,417 ✓	World Council of Churches ....	340,640 ✓
CORSO .....	120,782 ✓	United Nations System:	
St. Vincent de Paul .....	1,586 ✓	United Nations Development	
Norway (Government) .....	135,010 ✓	Program .....	82,745 ✓
Red Cross .....	99,959 ✓	United Nations Disaster Relief	
Norwegian Church Relief ...	1,205,967 ✓	Office .....	20,000 ✓
Poland		United Nations High	
Red Cross .....	5,807 ✓	Commissioner for Refugees	10,000 ✓
Romania (Government) .....	20,000 ✓	United Nations International	
Red Cross .....	49,875 ✓	Children's Fund .....	4,950,000 ✓
Saudi Arabia (Government) ....	2,252,252 ✓	World Food Program .....	2,900,000 ✓
Spain		European Economic Community	10,026,672 ✓
Red Cross .....	3,126 ✓		<u>\$19,735,682</u>
Sweden (Government) .....	2,058,855 ✓	Grand Total—	
Red Cross .....	233,450 ✓	International Community ....	\$57,662,624



*Instant corn-soya-milk (CSM) provided by A.I.D. is being prepared for a special feeding program for malnourished children.*

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**ETHIOPIA**